

Hafa Adai!

Torres in Guam, designates Hofschneider as acting governor. **PAGE 4**
'Toys for Tots Motorcycle Ride' set for Dec. 19. **PAGE 6**

\$1

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5 local judges recuse selves from hearing Torres' lawsuit

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

All five Superior Court judges have recused themselves from hearing Gov. Ralph DLG Torres lawsuit against the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee over its decision to hold him



Naraja



Bogdan



Govendo



Camacho



Kim-Tenorio

in contempt and his request for the court to quash the subpoena the committee had issued against him.

See **JUDGES** on **Page 4**

Villagomez asks Manibusan to prosecute Torres

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) certified yesterday the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee's statement holding Gov. Ralph DLG. Tor-



Villagomez



Manibusan

See **VILLAGOMEZ** on **Page 4**

New quarantine protocols

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. will be implementing quarantine protocols dependent on a patient's symptom status.

If an individual tests positive
See **NEW** on **Page 4**

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:38pm, Dec. 15, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **92%**

Days since last community transmission **1**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	35,791
Fully Vaccinated:	33,068
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,252
Fully Vaccinated:	4,811
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,114

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,340	8	19,348
Recovered	18,807	2	18,809
Active	272	8	270
Deaths	269	0	269

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	1,908	110	2,018
Traced via Travel Screening	274	0	274
Traced via Community Screening	1,634	110	1,744
Deaths	6	0	6

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>



NMI total now at 2,018 after 110 new cases

A total of 110 new cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed from surveillance testing on Dec. 12-13, 2021, bringing the CNMI total to 2,018 cases since March 28, 2020.

The individuals have been isolated and are actively monitored. As of Dec. 13, 2021,

there have been 884 recoveries made, 840 active cases, and 3 deaths of the cases identified since Oct. 28, 2021.

As of Dec. 13, 2021, there
See **TOTAL** on **Page 4**

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

9 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Pfizer said its experimental pill to treat COVID-19 appears effective against the omicron variant.

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NATION

The U.S. on Tuesday hit another depressing pandemic milestone—800,000 deaths.

PAGE 12



ASIA

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday withdrew his senatorial candidacy.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

Torres, Legislature work to provide retiree bonuses

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres wrote Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider and Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez last Tuesday to support a joint resolution that would allow the Department of Finance to provide \$500 bonuses to CNMI retirees.

"Since the beginning of my administration, we have prioritized improving our government's ability to provide quality public service to our islands and make good on all our judgments and obliga-

tions. We've made sure our public servants are taken care of for their years of hard work and dedication to the community. We can't move forward as a community, until we take care of those who served before us," said Torres.

The purpose of the joint resolution is to address technicalities that will delay disbursement of the retiree bonus payments that were initially scheduled for Dec. 15, 2021. Legislative support for a joint resolution will al-

low the Department of Finance to reprogram the \$1.3 million needed for the bonus payments to retirees.

Torres has collaborated with Senate leadership on the introduction of a joint resolution. The Senate is scheduled to hold a session yesterday, Dec. 15, 2021, to act on this. Upon passage in the Senate, it will be transmitted to the House of Representatives, which is scheduled to hold a session on Dec. 20, 2021.

"The Secretary of Finance and I have also been in communication with the NMI Settlement Fund trustee Joyce Tang and the Office of the Attorney General and have in concert agreed that this is the best course of action to take in order to meet this goal. The NMI Settlement Fund is on standby for the passage of the resolution by the Legislature to distribute the retiree bonus payments," said Torres.

Torres added that through the

collaboration of the Legislature and the Department of Finance, the administration's commit-

ment to meet the government's obligation to the retirees of the CNMI continues. (PR)

COVID mitigation platform for foreign travelers entering NMI

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force announced yesterday the launch of its new Pandemic Mitigation Platform for foreign travelers entering into the CNMI to streamline user registration, COVID-19 status monitoring and updates, contact tracing, case management, business/organizational digital logbooks, QR-code establishment check-in, and traveler PCR/vaccination uploads.

Soon to come will be consolidating Customs and MVA online forms into the same ecosystem. Further directives are forthcoming concerning the Safe Travels Marianas Platform rollout and implementation.

"My team and I are proud to announce this platform developed by our people in conjunction with global players in the IT industry. This system will keep our economy open and our people in the Commonwealth safe. Also, I ask our people to please register your business establishments so we can all be safer by using technology to improve and innovate contact tracing in the Marianas," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

organizations soon. An announcement will be provided in this implementation phase this week.

The following steps will be announced in due course.

Information

Safe Travels Marianas is a Web and mobile application (available on iOS and Android) that enables contact tracing by alerting its users if they have come into close contact with COVID-19 cases declared by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force under suspected, probable, and confirmed statuses. Through the

ON THE NET

www.safetravels-marianas.com

STM Platform, it will help mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 through

advanced contact tracing, health condition reporting, case management modules, and social distancing reminders customized for travelers.

Businesses/organizations will have the ability to register an account with a unique QR code for each entry and exit point of their establishments.

Travelers/users will be then required to scan the QR code upon entering the premises of an establishment. From there, the software will automatically log a visit for that user to that establishment, creating a community-wide digital logbook while still protecting travelers' private information. (PR)

Next steps

The Task Force authorized representatives will begin implementation and onboarding with CNMI businesses and

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Fiesta logo, branding removed from Garapan hotel

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

A team of contractors worked yesterday morning to remove the logo and lettering of the former Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. The removal project is part of renovations in progress as the Garapan hotel prepares to operate as the Crowne Plaza Resort beginning March 2022.

SM Enterprises LLC, a heavy equipment rental, manpower services, and general construction firm, was at the project site yesterday providing a manlift truck and professional operators.

Speaking briefly about what he knew about the current scope of work, Franco Getueza of SME said that work to remove the large letters that spelled "FIESTA" began at 7:30am yesterday. Once the letters were removed, next up was Fiesta's logo, an effort that Getueza projected would be completed by noon yesterday.

Murphy Enterprises Inc., a general contractor, provided personnel who aided in the letters and logo removal. The firm was also contracted to paint the entire exterior of the Garapan hotel.

In an interview yesterday with Murphy Enterprises superintendent Matthew Murphy, he said that once the logo and letters are removed, Murphy Enterprises will plaster, repaint, and patch up the holes and markings left by the Fiesta logo and letters. Citing the importance of maintaining worker safety, Murphy Enterprises' role in the project may be a 12-hour endeavor, said Murphy.

"We try to get the guys to move as quickly as they can, but obviously safety is a huge issue here [with] the height and everything. So we want to take our time, do it right, and do it safely," he said.

Appearing briefly at the project site was Crowne Plaza Resort general manager Robert Coates, who said the hotel will be operating as the Crowne Plaza Resort in March 2022 and that several local contractors were brought in to provide areas of expertise and perform different roles. He described yesterday's project and the brand transition as an "exciting time and an era change."

"It's quite an exciting time and an era change. Fiesta's been here for a long, long time, but now we're moving into a new time with the Crowne Plaza," he said.

In early March this year, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the hotel grounds to mark the begin-

ning of the hotel's change from Fiesta to Crowne Plaza Resort. Ten months before this groundbreaking ceremo-

ny in March, TanHoldings Corp. chief executive officer Jerry Tan announced that the company had inked a man-

agement contract with InterContinental Hotel Group to manage the Garapan property, giving the CNMI another

international hotel brand. IHG will run the hotel but it will still be owned by TanHoldings Corp.

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KBB: \$29,936

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STK: 19P373
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KBB: \$22,453

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MAZDA6 SPORT



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• 56,800 MILES
• STK: 16R269
• KBB: \$14,450

2017 MAZDA
MAZDA3 SPORT



SALE PRICE
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• 38,500 MILES
• STK: 21D019C
• KBB: \$19,253

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WRANGLER SPORT



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• STK: 5P279
• KBB: \$32,299

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RIDGELINE RTL-E-AWD



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• 34,455 MILES
• STK: 19P367
• KBB: \$47,459

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FORTE HATCHBACK



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• 13,501 MILES
• STK: 18HS950
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• STK: 15P354A

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• STK: 17P362

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• 28,265 MILES
• STK: 17P347

2018 KIA
FORTE LX



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• 15,501 MILES
• STK: 18HS922
• KBB: \$18,632

2020 HYUNDAI
VENUE



SALE PRICE
\$18,995

• 8,383 MILES
• STK: 21D082A
• KBB: \$21,071

2013 TOYOTA
FJ CRUISER 4WD



SALE PRICE
\$37,995

• 85,000 MILES
• STK: 13P359

2018 JEEP
WRANGLER SPORT 4WD



SALE PRICE
\$45,995

• 26,205 MILES
• STK: 18P345

2018 MAZDA
MAZDA3 SPORT



SALE PRICE
\$17,995

• 11,682 MILES
• STK: 8HS885
• KBB: \$19,053

2015 TOYOTA
CAMRY LE



SALE PRICE
\$19,995

• 44,202 MILES
• STK: 15P325
• KBB: \$20,295

2014 TOYOTA
FJ CRUISER



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\$40,995

• 41,344 MILES
• STK: 14P342
• KBB: \$41,584

2019 JEEP
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• STK: 19P349

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• KBB: \$25,353



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Torres in Guam, designates Hofschneider as acting governor

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres went off-island yesterday and designated Senate

President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) as acting governor.

In a memorandum addressed to all department and activity heads, Torres said he will be out of the Com-

monwealth from yesterday to this Saturday.

The governor designated Hofschneider as acting governor because Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is cur-

rently off-island.

"I advise all departments and agencies to ensure all actions, documents, and correspondences during this time reflect this assumption of authority," said Torres in the memorandum.

Hofschneider said he just received the governor's official notification after the Senate's session yesterday afternoon.

Press secretary Kevin Bautista said Torres is attending a funeral of a fam-

ily friend and will meet with several government officials in Guam. Bautista said the meeting is regarding collaborations between the CNMI and Guam.

On Tuesday, the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee voted "yes" to hold Torres in contempt for not appearing at the JGO hearing pursuant to a subpoena served on him. Torres and the Office of the Governor filed Tuesday a lawsuit to quash the subpoena.

IPI creditors oppose extended stay on IPI receivership

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER

The other creditors who have essentially piggybacked on the receivership granted in favor of U.S.A. Fanter Corp., Ltd. in its breach of contract suit against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC have filed a motion opposing IPI's recent request to extend the stay on the receivership.

Last Dec. 10, the seven workers who sued IPI for labor violations, Ping Shun Corp., and "other creditors" filed a motion, called the "Other Creditors' Motion," to amend the U.S. District Court for the NMI's previous order establishing a receivership to liquidate IPI's casino gaming

equipment. They want the order to also allow the receiver to sell assets sufficient to satisfy the other creditors' judgments and permitting any of the other creditors who has not been adequately secured to effectively step into Fanter's shoes and pursue the receivership.

Earlier this week, IPI filed a motion stating that a bond had been posted to secure USA Fanter and therefore requested that the court further stay the receivership, which had been postponed to the end of this month.

However, the creditors, in a joint motion filed yesterday, said they oppose a further extension of the stay of the receivership unless or until agreements with IPI to ade-

quately secure their own judgments have been reached.

"The parties are working to reach agreements to adequately secure the other creditors' judgments. If such agreements are reached, IPI's opposition to the other creditors' motion will become moot and plaintiffs' opposition to IPI's motion to extend stay will become moot," the joint motion stated.

Accordingly, the parties, including IPI, agree that no party shall be required to file an opposition prior to the status conference currently scheduled for Dec. 17.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

TOTAL

From Page 1

are 12 individuals hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 (eight unvaccinated, four vaccinated; zero on a ventilator); and three were discharged from the Alternative Care Site and one from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

Of the 110 new cases, 21 were identified on Dec. 12, and 89 were identified on Dec. 13; a total of 53 were identified via contact tracing,

and 57 were identified via community testing. The vaccination statuses of the 110 cases identified are pending verification.

A total of 693 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Dec. 14, 2021, resulting in 91.6% of the CNMI's 12-years-old and older population being fully vaccinated, which affords the community more protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

Since Oct. 28, 2021, there have been 1,727 new cases, of which 929 were identified via contact tracing,

779 were identified via community testing, and 19 were identified via travel testing.

A total of 709 COVID-19 tests were conducted from Dec. 12-13, 2021, which comprises travel testing and surveillance testing but does not include DFEMS testing.

The CHCC Communicable Disease Investigation/Inspection team has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the newly confirmed cases, and this effort will continue until all probable cases are identified and tested. **(PR)**

VILLAGOMEZ

From Page 1

res in contempt for not appearing before the committee pursuant to a subpoena.

Villagomez wrote Attorney General Edward Manibusan to request that he initiate prosecution of Torres.

He said the JGO committee did not take lightly its actions Tuesday when the members unanimously voted to hold Torres in contempt. He said it is only out of respect for the Office of the Governor as an institution and for comity between the branches that the JGO committee acted with the restraint and patience it has shown in the face of obstruction and intransigence.

"But the governor left little choice," Villagomez said.

He said a legislative committee's "ability to obtain evidence from the governor is in furtherance of the separation of powers principle, not in derogation of it."

Saying the Executive Branch is a separate and co-equal branch of government under the Commonwealth Constitution, Torres said Tuesday morning that he will not be appearing before the JGO committee.

In a video posted on the Office of the Governor's Facebook account, Torres described the JGO committee as "out of control" with a simple agenda to impeach him.

This prompted the JGO committee, chaired by Rep. Celina R. Babauta

(D-Saipan), to vote "yes" to a motion to hold the governor in contempt.

Later in the afternoon yesterday, Torres and the Office of the Governor filed a lawsuit against the JGO committee to quash the subpoena.

Torres and the Office of the Governor, through counsels Joseph E. Horey and Gilbert Birnbrich respectively, asked the Superior Court to declare that the JGO Committee's subpoena served on the governor is invalid and unlawful.

Torres and the Office of the Governor asked the court to issue an order quashing the subpoena and enjoining the JGO committee from enforcing the subpoena and House sergeant-at-arms Pedro Towai from arresting him.

discussion with Torres about testifying in front of the JGO committee.

Kim-Tenorio stated that she chose to recuse herself because her spouse is the director of the Legislative Bureau, appointed by the leadership of both Houses, which includes members of the JGO Committee who are defendants in Torres' lawsuit.

Furthermore, co-defendant, sergeant-at-arms Peter Towai, is employed by the Legislative Bureau thereby making Kim-Tenorio's spouse the hiring authority.

Naraja and Camacho both cited Commonwealth law 1 CMC § 3308 stating that they must recuse themselves due to a conflict of interest.

Now that the judges have all re-

cused themselves, the court may have to find another judge to sit in. When this happens, usually a judge from Guam will be asked to hear the case.

According to a previous article, Torres and the Office of the Governor filed its lawsuit against the JGO Committee over its decision to hold him in contempt. Torres wants the Superior Court to declare that the JGO Committee's subpoena served on the governor is invalid and unlawful.

Torres has also asked the court to quash the subpoena and stop the committee from enforcing the subpoena and Towai from arresting the governor.

In addition, Torres demanded payment of costs incurred in filing the lawsuit.

PSS' Q2 school-based antigen test results out

The CNMI Public School System has reported that, as of Dec. 10, 75% of PSS' entire student population had undergone antigen testing and that 1% of students have tested positive for COVID-19.

In a report that PSS published Tuesday morning, it said the school-based antigen testing was conducted from Nov. 29 to Dec. 10 and that, of its 9,117 total students, 6,861 students were tested, and that 83 students tested positive. The report, which displays the testing numbers from school to school, can be found on PSS' Facebook page.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. had clarified in a separate news release that "false positive" results are possible with antigen testing, so anyone who test positive will have to

undergo a separate PCR test, which is considered the "gold standard" for COVID-19 testing.

The report also included several things of note regarding COVID-19 antigen tests. PSS said that the purpose of antigen testing is "to detect 'possible' presence of COVID-19," and that if an antigen test shows a positive result, a PCR test will be administered to confirm or refute the antigen test results.

PSS also said the published data does not include testing numbers and results of students aged 18 years old or older, as these students were administered PCR tests. As of the time of the publishing of the antigen testing report, PSS added that it "does not have any official data regarding positive PCR test results." **(Joshua Santos)**

NEW

From Page 1

ive and is asymptomatic (showing no symptoms of COVID-19), then self-quarantine for 10 days is an option offered to them, provided they can safely self-isolate. If an individual decides that they cannot safely self-quarantine (e.g., they live with a family member who has underlying health conditions or is immunocompromised), isolation at the designated government facility will be an option offered.

If an individual tests positive and is symptomatic (showing signs of symptoms of COVID-19), then the individual will be isolated for 10 days at the designated government facility.

For close contacts of confirmed positive cases, their COVID-19 vaccination status will be considered. After being identified as a close contact, fully vaccinated close contacts will be tested as soon as possible, will not be ordered to quarantine of any kind, and must return for their fifth-day test. If their test returns positive for COVID-19, they will go through the process of being confirmed as a positive case.

Unvaccinated close contacts will be tested as soon as possible, will be ordered to self-quarantine, and must return for their fifth-day test. If their test returns positive for COVID-19, they will go through the process of being confirmed as a positive case.

These changes are being implemented since approximately 93.1% of the CNMI's adult population are now fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and approximately 91% of its 12-year-old and older population are fully vaccinated, combined with the expansion of Pfizer- BioNTech CO-

VID-19 vaccine booster shot eligibility to 16- and 17-year-olds.

The CHCC highly encourages unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated or get a booster shot against COVID-19 to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Data from small clinical trials show that vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization. Register for COVID-19 vaccination at www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms like coughing, fever, shortness of breath, or new loss of taste or smell, get checked by a health care provider right away, or call the CHCC Tele-Triage line (670) 233-2067 if you do not have a provider.

If you are not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and it has been 5 to 7 days since your exposure to a person who may have COVID-19, avail of the free DFEMS antigen testing (Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, 8am-4pm, at Kagman, Garapan, or Susupe fire stations) or the free community-based testing (register at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health>; more dates will be announced).

While you wait to get tested or get your test results, follow the 3 W's (wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance), stay at home as much as possible, and limit your contact with others.

Additional U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines on how to protect yourself and others include: avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily; be alert for symptoms daily; and get tested for COVID-19. **(PR)**

JUDGES

From Page 1

Last Tuesday, Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja, and associate judges Wesley Bogdan, Kenneth Govendo, Joseph Camacho, and Teresa Kim-Tenorio all officially recused themselves from hearing Torres' lawsuit.

In his order for recusal, Bogdan stated that hearing the case would be a conflict of interest as he served as the former legal counsel to Torres.

According to Govendo, he recused himself and returned the case for re-assignment because over two weeks ago at a birthday party, the he held a



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'Toys for Tots Motorcycle Ride' set for Dec. 19

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Weather permitting, a "Toys for Tots Motorcycle Ride" is set for this Sunday, Dec. 19.

Beginning at the big Mobil gas station in Garapan at 9am and ending at around 11:30am at the CNMI Marines Recruitment Office along Beach Road. Those interested in learning more about the event or are interested in participating can contact Dr. Dan Chase at 670-285-4490.

Chase said Monday that he has previously taken part in

Toys for Tots rides in the U.S. mainland and wanted to bring the tradition to the CNMI. Through talks with some of the CNMI's motorcycle clubs and talks with fellow Marines in Guam, Chase took it upon himself to make the motorcycle ride a reality.

"Since I've been here in the last several years, [I've] always looked at what can we do to improve the CNMI. As a prior Marine, one of the big things we always take part of in the States is the Toys for Tots. So I was talking it over with all the bikers out here and

[go] 'Hey, why don't we do a Toys for Tots Ride?'" he said.

Chase noted that a motorcycle ride like this has taken place before, with Latte Built Gym owner Derek Cutting organizing a motorcycle ride and toy donation event some time ago. Regardless if Sunday's event is the first or second of its kind, Chase said the goal for Sunday's event is to give back to those in need and for the CNMI's motorcycle riders to come together for a good cause.

As for what is scheduled for Sunday's ride, Chase said the riders will first convene

at Mobil, go through a safety briefing for 30 to 45 minutes, then hit the road. Along the two-hour ride route, bikers will be picking up toys donated by community members. Chase said he has been making arrangements with the Office of the Governor to possibly have Department of Public Safety and Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services personnel help in the toy pickup efforts.

At around 11:30am, the ride will end with the drop-off of toy donations at the CNMI Marines Recruitment Office, which is organizing the Toys for Tots program and will take the lead in handing out the toys to underserved children. Chase said that Staff Sgt. Jeremy B. Lizama, who currently works

as a recruiter at the office, was interested in holding the Toys for Tots donation there.

Chase said that planning for the motorcycle ride began in late October to early November, and he thanked Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, chief of staff for the CNMI Office of the Governor William "Wil" Mendiola Castro, and motorcycle rider Marie Salas-Igitol for their active support of his plans. "Two months ago, I talked to the governor and lieutenant governor about wanting to do this and they both gave me the thumbs up and said, 'Dan, let me know how things progress and let me know if you need help in any way'. ...As things really progressed on this, Wil Castro really stepped up and helped out a lot keeping the governor and lieutenant governor informed," he said.

Chase added that the Office of the Governor will be providing ice chests filled with water to keep riders hydrated for the Sunday ride.

Chase said that Salas-Igitol provided much-needed help with internal organizing and coordinating with bikers. "As I started planning this, Maria was the very first person I reached out to, and...she's been probably the No. 1 supporter for this. It really could not have happened without her support on the internal side," he said.

The Marine Toys for Tots program is a program that seeks to distribute toys to underserved children who would have otherwise not been able to afford toys and/or gifts for Christmas. Chase is a Marine veteran who has been living on Saipan for more than three years now. He moved to the CNMI in July 2019.

PSA

The office of Vocational Rehabilitation will be closed during the duration of the government shut down for the safety of our staff, consumers and community...

Thank you for
your understanding.



Public invited to 'Holiday Art Bazaar' at KCC

The public is invited to attend the "Holiday Art Bazaar" this Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, from 9am to 3pm at the Kagman Community Center.

This is an event for the residents of Saipan and the Precinct 5 community to promote local art, artists, and small businesses and to provide a venue for people to buy locally made gifts in time for the holidays.

The diversity of locally made products that will be available on this day will be seen in the variety of vendors who have signed up so far. Artists and small business owners you can expect to see at the KCC on this day are NATURES Treasures (coconut weaving and handmade items); Candle J (handmade scented candles, sprays, wax melts and coconut oils); Kim Mendiola's localized holiday

gift wrap as seen on Instagram; Bonito Basula (handmade jewelry made from the beaches of Saipan); Chiku-Chiku (hair accessories and gift baskets); Nai's Creations (handmade beaded jewelry, crafts and plants); Kips Art (sculptures and art); Treasures from the Sea (local shell jewelry and nature's gift art); Saipan Snaps (handcrafted greeting cards and Saipan Snaps cookies); Seasoned with Hafa Adai (wood craft, macrame jewelry resin art); UchanEsti (crochet goodies-hats, bags, tops; and Marianas Creations, who support many of these and other local artists by selling their work in their establishment year round. They will bring some of their current inventory of existing art for sale!

There will also be a variety of food vendors selling lunch

and some of your favorite treats: Pika Tinian (hot pepper paste and other items); Maie Pachotmu (denanche); 2 Seastars Co., (Chamorro food pastries and gift baskets); Passion KB (the Cinnabun queen); Ty-lers Gelatte Stone (ice cream); and PhoKing A (pho and other local fusion favorites).

This event is sponsored by the offices of your Precinct 5 representatives and has been approved by the COVID-19 Task Force. We will be following the Governor's executive order.

For your interest and safety, note the KCC auditorium COVID-19 capacity is 160 people. We will ensure to stay well below the 50% mark. Additionally, there will be two large Airfilter Scrubber systems set up during the event. Research on air filters during this pandemic has found that HEPA air filters can greatly reduce the airborne particles of COVID in an indoor space.

The COVID safety guidelines of the 3-W's will be enforced: Wash your hands, Wear a Mask, Watch your distance. **(PR)**

Temporary office closure and limited services

The Settlement Fund office was closed yesterday, Dec. 15, 2021, for disinfection purposes in light of employee exposure to a confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

In a notice yesterday, it said the Fund will resume limited operations today, Dec. 16, 2021, and will receive and respond to inquiries by phone or email only between 8am and 5pm, Monday-Friday. Office access to the public is restricted. This schedule will be in effect until further notice.

Contact Information for the Settlement Fund:

■ Cell: (670) 285-3898
■ Email: info@nmisf.com. **(PR)**



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Statewide Independent Living Council "Yes I Can!"

P.O. BOX 501521, SAIPAN, MP 96950: TEL: (670) 322-6537/8
FAX: (670) 322-6536 TTY: (670) 322-6449; E-MAIL: nmidir@ovrgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9910, the public is advised that the Statewide Independent Living Council will hold its FY 2022 First General Membership Meeting on Monday, December 20, 2021 OVR Conference room via zoom from 9:00 am - 11:30 am.

Interested individuals are welcome to attend.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda of December 20, 2021
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes of Joint State Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council General membership meeting of September 18, 2021
- V. Reports
 - a. SILC Interim Chairperson
 - b. CLI Executive Director
 - c. OVR Executive Director
- VI. Old Business
 - a. Membership Vacancies
 - b. Orientation and Training
 - c. FY 2021 Annual Report
- VII. New Business
 - a. Review of membership attendance
- VIII. Action Items
 - a. Special Election
 - I. Chairperson
 - II. Secretary
- IX. Announcements/Miscellaneous
- X. Adjournment

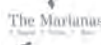
In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend the meeting but require accommodations such as large print or sign language interpreters are asked to call Ms. Amber Pangelinan (OVR Administrative and Operations Specialist) at 322-6537(voice) or 322-6449(TTY) or email amber@ovrgov.net for necessary arrangements no later than Friday, December 17, 2021 at 9:00am.

/s/ Consolacion Atalig
SILC Interim Chairperson

Publication of this notice is paid for by federal funds made possible by a grant from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).



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SAIPAN, MP 96950
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FAX: (670) 664-3237
info@mymarianas.com
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SPECIAL BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Marianas Visitors Authority hereby gives notice that a **Special Board of Directors Meeting** will be held on **Friday, December 17, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.** in the MVA Conference Room, Saipan, MP 96950

MEETING AGENDA

- 1) Preliminary Matters
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - c. Adoption of Agenda
- 2) Public Comments
- 3) Committee Reports
 - a. CNMI TRIP Program
 - i. Korea
- 4) Executive Session
- 7) Miscellaneous/Announcements
- 8) Adjournment

/s/ Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

500 Sails welcomes the arrival of its *Sailmobile*

500 Sails welcomes the arrival of its 14-passenger van, a 2018 Ford Transit 350 LR Wagon, affectionately known as the *Sailmobile*.

Despite having a 12-15 mpg range, the *Sailmobile* is able to safely transport its participants to and from its program sites.

Sporting the cherry red color with the 500 Sails logo on its side, the *Sailmobile* was a work in progress with Joeten Motors over the last few months that has finally come to fruition.

Since October 2016, 500 Sails was using its Toyota Tacoma cherry red pickup truck to transport materials in its cargo hold. However, in recognizing the disparities in student participation based on limitations to transportation, co-founders Peter and Emma Perez stepped in.

"We didn't mean to be transporting students; it just happened organically with the [Public School System's Co-operative Education program] kids and once we started doing that, we knew that we had to have a safer way of taking

them home. With this van, we can pick up students from their home or school sites to take them to our *Sunday Sails*, *Sirena* classes, *Gamsun Projects*, *Songsong Mami* classes, and our *Peskan Taddong* programs. While our programs are free, sometimes the families don't have the time or they don't have the fuel or vehicle to take their kids over to our programs. We're hoping that by having this transportation system in place, we can increase overall student participation," said Emma and Pete Perez.

500 Sails is a 501(c)3 and CNMI tax-exempt nonprofit organization dedicated to reviving, promoting, and preserving the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands through community engagement in canoe cultural values and activities. 500 Sails' vision is a healthy thriving native community that has successfully integrated traditional cultural values into modern life.

Further information can



Senior boatbuilder and master navigator Mario Benito drives away in the *Sailmobile*, 500 Sails' new 14-passenger van acquired from Joeten Motors.

MARJORIE DARIA

be found on the 500 Sails website at <https://500sails.org> and updates on our com-

munity programs can be found on our 500 Sails Facebook and Instagram pages. Ex-

ecutive Director Peter Perez can be reached via email through pperez@500sails.org.

org or at the boatyard in Lower Base at (670) 323-7245 (SAIL). (PR)

Rip currents seen until Friday

The public is being warned that there is currently a high risk of rip currents through Friday night.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents will be present in east facing reefs of the Marianas.

Rip currents can sweep

even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. The public is advised to avoid venturing out toward east facing reefs. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. (PR)



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**



INVITATION TO BID
RFP NO.: DPW21-RFP-42200016

SUBMISSION DATE: January 11, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"Architectural and Engineering Design of Route 205
Road and Drainage Improvement, Tinian;
Project No. TQ-THS-0205 (101)"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The RFP Package and Scope of Work is available on or after **December 09, 2021** at the Department of Public Works, Technical Services Division 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center.

There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **December 28, 2021**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **January 05, 2022** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ANTHONY A. CAMACHO
ACTING SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES



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Opinion

Hafa Adair!

Saipan Tribune

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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Unity, resolve needed on Ukraine crisis

Allied unity—and, most profoundly, resolve—is key in convincing Russian President Vladimir Putin that the cost of invading Ukraine is too high to bear.

Ukraine also must be allowed to choose its own orientation. As a free and independent state, the nation cannot be forced into Russia's sphere of influence, which is the end game Putin's troop buildup gambit seems to seek.

So far, so good for those opposing Kremlin coercion. Unlike the recent allied dysfunction on display when President Joe Biden only minimally consulted with NATO nations as the U.S. sped for the exits in Afghanistan, the U.S. and its European partners seem aligned on Ukraine.

Biden represented that unified approach relatively well when he warned Putin in a videoconference last week of severe sanctions from the West if Russia, which already cleaved Crimea in 2014 and has aided and abetted separatists in portions of Eastern Ukraine in the years since, were to fully invade the region with the 100,000 or more troops it has amassed along the border.

What Biden did not and should not pledge is deploying U.S. or NATO troops to directly fight the Russians; such a full-scale conflict between the top-two nuclear powers could become catastrophic. But the nuclear issue may just be heating up: On Monday a Russian deputy foreign minister said that his country could deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe in response to its belief that NATO plans the same, a charge the alliance dismissed. (Such deployments were banned by a 1987 treaty that the U.S. pulled out of in 2019.)

Biden rightfully did not overpromise on Putin's demands, including legal guarantees that NATO would not expand eastward. That decision should be for Ukraine (and Georgia, for that matter) and NATO to negotiate. A 2008 agreement to do just that is still stalled, but according to public opinion polls in Ukraine the desire to do so has never been higher. And no wonder, given Russia's aggression that goes well beyond and before Crimea.

Although it's possible that Russia will attack, the likelihood is relatively low, John E. Herbst, the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine from 2003-2006, told an editorial writer. "I don't think he will invade because the risk to him of invasion is high in part because the U.S. response to this threat has been quick and strong," said Herbst, now the senior director of the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center.

It's in the U.S. interest, Herbst said, to stick to principles the international community has widely agreed to, including "the right of countries to choose their own domestic and foreign policies, their rights of sovereignty and territorial integrity." Acceding to the Kremlin's quest to get a veto (even though Ukraine and Georgia are nowhere near NATO membership) "is manifestly not in the U.S. interest."

On Sunday, the G-7 backed these principles with a strongly worded warning of "massive consequences" and "severe costs" should Russia invade. That's helpful, but Moscow will be watching for Western wavering. So too will Beijing regarding its bellicosity toward Taiwan.

Now is the time for democratic allies to prioritize diplomacy, but not sell out countries that have a right to choose their own futures.

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Here's what Xi can learn from Putin

In his quest to make his country the undisputed leader of the global economy, China's President Xi Jinping can learn a lot from his next-door neighbor, Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Not about what to do, but about what not to do.

Except Xi just doesn't seem to get it.

As we speak, Putin has been putting on a cram course of a clinic that you would think would be helping his nominally still-communist neighbor figure out how to out-capitalist the capitalists. Someday in the not-far-off future, Xi's China could prove capable of capturing the global economy's statistically figurative golden cup.

Yet a number of times, in recent years and especially this year, Xi has seemed as if he is imitating Putin's mindset and mistakes, not learning from them. China seems determined to showcase itself as the bully in the 'hood—and maybe even much worse.

So today let's take a close look at the conduct and choices made by Putin and then by Xi. We'll see parallels that undoubtedly have pleased Russia's dapper despot—but should have caused Xi to hit rewind and rethink.

First, let's rewind and rethink Putin: Success in the global economy must start with at least the appearance of a Good Neighbor Policy. But Putin has been willing to massively invade or mysteriously kidnap and poison to get what he wants. Also, we recall Putin's planned Sochi Two Step of 2014: To showcase Russia's global economy potential, Putin planned to host the Sochi Winter Olympics—and then host the G-8 economic summit in Sochi. But in between, Ukraine sought new economic ties with Europe—and Putin exploded at having the world see Ukraine rejecting Russia. So he invaded and captured Crimea—causing the G-8 to cancel its Sochi summit and kick Russia out, making it the G-7.

Today, Putin has amassed some 100,000 troops along Russia's border with Ukraine. He did it either to invade and conquer his neighbor that was once part of the Soviet Union, or just as a foolhardy way to get the United States and Europe to pledge Ukraine will never be admitted into NATO. President Joe Biden this week warned Putin if he invades Ukraine, Russia will suffer economic repercussions "like ones he's never seen." Russia will become an economic shell of its already Potemkin economic self.

Of course, there is a world of difference between Putin's Russia and Xi's China. Putin's Russia is a nuclear superpower, otherwise just borderline above much of the Third World—and often seems unable to fend for itself. Overwhelmed by COVID-19, Russia reportedly suffers more than 1,000 deaths and 35,000 new infections a day. Russian independent journalist Alexey

By **MARTIN SCHRAM**

Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.



Kovalev wrote in The New York Times that "only 41 percent of the country's people are fully vaccinated, a lower number than in Laos or Cape Verde."

In contrast, China swiftly protected and vaccinated itself—after its global sin of initially covering up while COVID-19 generated and spread. And last September, The Economist reported the success story that means most to Xi's China: "Is China already the world's most dominant economy? By one measure, yes." One expert's statistical analysis of countries' "economic dominance" showed that China surpassed the United States and became the world's dominant economy in 2020. Other analyses show the USA still has a narrow lead.

Now let's rewind and rethink Xi: First, China used a Summer Olympics in 2008 to introduce its sparkling new high-tech self to the world. Now it is about to host the Winter Olympics. But Xi's China has shamed itself by what the United States has called its "genocide" and abuses against the Uyghur Muslims. Also by its crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong and its recent military harassment flights in the skies around Taiwan.

Does Xi plan to invade Taiwan someday? Or is he just bullying and menacing, Putin-style, to get the West's attention? Xi must ask himself: Does atrocious conduct mean more to me than seeing China emerge from the economic backwaters that Richard Nixon first saw to lead the world's economy?

Because that's what he is ultimately risking. The international corporations, global markets and the politicians who front for the global economy have pocketed huge profits and meekly overlooked all the above inhumanity that was "Made in China."

But they, too, bend and inevitably buckle under the demands of a greater power. And that power is you—and all the decent consumers throughout the world.

When you "Just say No!" and refuse to buy anything bearing the badge of proven genocidal criminals and humanity's bul- lies—well, that is the one power that can buckle and even break the dominance of both China's abusive rulers and capitalism's maxi-profit moralists who have too long served as China's silent collaborators.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Transforming our waste stream can start today

Trash is everybody's business. Over the last few months in this column, the Universal Garbage Collection Task Force has listed the many ways that the improper disposal of garbage affects our homes, health, safety, and environment. However, before we even begin to tackle the solutions for these issues, we must take our first step as a community—accepting the fact that garbage is everyone's concern.

As a consumer society, we are all responsible for our environment. We must do our part to keep our lands and surrounding waters clean for our people and the generations to follow. Accepting this responsibility isn't always easy. Mariana Islands Nature Alliance conducted multiple surveys over the years about why people litter, and the answers are not surprising. They are consistent with the idea that "someone" will come in after they're gone to clean up the mess. Unfortunately, for many years and even today, this mindset is still prevalent in our community.

An important key to changing this behavior is understanding that the proposed Universal Garbage Collection program can transform the Marianas into a truly pristine home for our residents and destination for our visitors. The absence of litter along our shores and inside our villages will go far in creating a desirable destination. The UGC system will support this by providing facilities that will make waste disposal convenient and efficient, and therefore reinforce good habits in our community. When we invite someone into our homes, we clean in preparation. In the same way, we must clean up our islands as we invite our visitors to enjoy our home and rebuild our tourism economy.

We also do not have to wait for the full execution of the UGC program. Today, we can all make practical and conscious changes

in how we treat waste disposal in our homes and when we are out enjoying our beaches and parks.

One of MINA's programs is "Adopt a Bin" with recycling bins placed at public parks and beach fronts. While many beachgoers make good use of these bins and place their recyclable items in the appropriate receptacles, there is a disheartening number of instances that we see reported in the news every Monday about litter everywhere. MINA's Rangers spend countless hours every week maintaining these bins and collecting household trash that gets dumped alongside them. If it weren't for the dedicated volunteers such as Max Aguon and his team who come in to clean up after people, their mess would end up in the ocean.

The Saipan Mayor's Office is doing a tremendous job of keeping our major roadways clean and free of litter, as is the Department of Parks and Recreation. BECQ and MINA's Tasi Watch Rangers do monthly beach cleanups with youth and civic organizations, but the question remains: why is garbage so carelessly tossed aside?

MINA's mission is "Empowering Communities for Conservation," and if we begin engaging in the proper management of

TRASH TALK**By ROBERTA GUERRERO**

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Roberta Guerrero is the executive director of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance. A proud resident of Saipan with a heart for volunteerism, Guerrero passionately serves the Marianas to preserve and protect the islands' environment for generations to follow.

waste disposal and recycling now, we can make a difference. With the implementation of the Universal Garbage Collection program, the Marianas can become a top-tier destination to visit and call home.

For more information about the Universal Garbage Collection initiative, visit the GCEA website at cnmieconomy.com. Engage with the UGC Task Force via email at gceacnmi@gmail.com.

'Tis the season for sonnets on it

LITERARY NOOK**By JOEY CONNOLLY**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

**Q&A Santa's On His Way**

Santa are you the real deal after Christmas meals is all that fat from eating all those sugar cookies do your elves put toys in stockings and on shelves when reindeers rest do you use trucks with 18 wheels is Santa Claus your real name or is it San Nicolas do you still bring the Little Drummer Boy drums when your belly shakes like jelly should it tickle us will you be visiting us until Kingdom comes underneath that red suit are you always sweating do you represent virtuous giving without getting and acts of kindness, love, and care for others are you really parents, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers Santa Claus are you really just an idea in my head well I got a white beard, please bring me a suit of red.

Santa Answers With 12 Prancers

My friends, yes, I'm a gift giver and the real deal for centuries involved in various gift giving plots with reindeer, horses, long haul trucks and cars with Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Toys For Tots other charities and many volunteer super stars so many children can greet Christmas with a smile and experience a morning with true childhood joy there are so many wishes I can't keep them all on file helpers try to have something for every girl and boy in the old days families got fruit cake and candy canes and hung up socks for Santa to come and fill with stuff now we even drop presents to islanders from planes some folks can't get off the island when water is rough hope that answers some of your questions, Santa explains.

On the climate crisis, delay has become the new form of denial

Whether it's the apocalyptic wildfires that once again ravaged California and the West this summer, a heat dome over the Pacific Northwest that made parts of Canada feel like Phoenix on the Fourth of July or the devastating floods in my state of Pennsylvania after Hurricane Ida dumped months' worth of rainfall in a few hours, it is clear that dangerous climate change is upon us.

One can no longer credibly deny that climate change is real, human-caused, and a threat to our civilization. That means that the forces of inaction—the fossil fuel interests and the front groups, organizations and mouthpieces-for-hire they fund—have been forced to turn to other tactics in their effort to keep us dependent on fossil fuels.

These tactics include deflection (focusing attention entirely on individual behavioral change so as to steer the societal discourse away from a discussion of the needed policies and systematic changes), division (getting climate advocates fighting with each other rather than speaking with a united voice), and the promotion of doomism (convincing some climate advocates that it's too late to do anything anyway).

But the D-word du jour is delay. And we've become all too familiar with the lexicon employed in its service: "adaptation," "resilience," "geoengineering" and "carbon capture." These words offer the soothing promise of action, but all fail to address the scale of the problem.

Adaptation and resilience are important. We must cope with the detrimental effects of climate change that are already baked in—coastal inundation and worse droughts, floods and other dangerous weather events. But if we fail to substantially reduce carbon emissions and stem the warming of the planet, we will exceed our collective adaptive capacity as a civilization.

When fossil fuel-friendly Republican Sen. Marco Rubio tells Floridians that they must simply "adapt" to sea level rise (how? By growing fins and gills?), he's trying to sound as if he's got a meaningful solution when, in fact, he's offering only empty rhetoric and a license for polluters to continue with business as usual. It's a delay tactic.

What about geoengineering? Should we engage in an enormous, unprecedented and uncontrolled experiment to further intervene with our planetary environment by, for example, shooting sulfur particulates into the stratosphere to block out the sun in hopes of somehow offsetting the warming effect of increasing carbon pollution?

The law of unintended consequences almost certainly ensures that we will screw up the planet even more. The idea of geoengineering also grants license for continued carbon pollution. There's a reason Rex Tillerson, former ExxonMobil CEO and Donald Trump's secretary of state, has dismissed the climate crisis as simply an "engineering problem." If we can simply clean up our act down the road, why not continue to burn fossil fuels?

By MICHAEL E. MANN

Los Angeles Times



Michael E. Mann is distinguished professor of atmospheric science and director of the Earth System Science Center at Penn State University. He is the author, most recently, of The New Climate War: The Fight to Take Back our Planet.

This, too, is a delay tactic—one that buys time for polluters to continue to make billions in profits as we mortgage the future habitability of the planet.

And what about "carbon capture" and the promise of "net zero" emissions by mid-century? Reaching zero emissions by 2050 will indeed be necessary to avert catastrophic planetary warming of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. But it is hardly sufficient. We must also cut emissions in half by 2030 to hold warming below the danger limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Merely committing to the former, but not the latter, is like making a New Year's resolution to lose 15 pounds without any plan to alter your diet and exercise regimen in the months ahead.






Furthermore, understand that the "net" in "net zero" is doing quite a bit of work, for implicit in the word is the notion that we can continue to burn fossil fuels if we can find a way to remove them just as quickly. To quote Will Smith's Genie in the movie "Aladdin," there's "a lot of gray area" in that word. It allows politicians to make vague promises of technological innovation, i.e., carbon capture, that would potentially remove billions of tons of carbon dioxide a year from the atmosphere in the future. Yet there is no precedent for deploying such technology on such a massive scale.

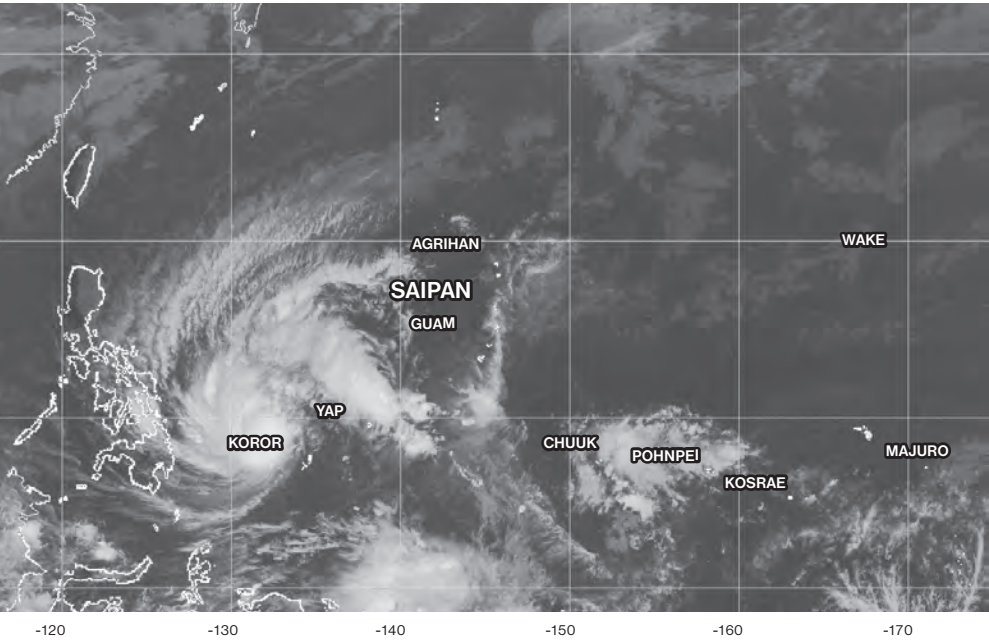
It's really easy to put carbon pollution into the atmosphere but really hard to take it back out and safely bury it for the long term. Nonetheless, the promise of carbon capture and net zero emissions decades from now allows politicians to kick the can so far down the road you can barely see it. That's another masterful delay tactic.

A newly released report based on leaked documents shows that the Australian government sought to water down an upcoming U.N. climate recommendation to phase out coal- and gas-fired power stations. Saudi Arabia and Russia—two countries that have worked to sabotage international climate action in the past—have made a mockery of the current climate negotiations by agreeing only to a laughably delinquent 2060 date for reaching net zero emissions.

The U.N. climate summit in Glasgow can still lay out a path forward, if a narrow one, to a livable clean energy future. But we cannot afford to fall victim to delay tactics. We must hold our policymakers accountable for representing the public interest rather than polluting interests. This is the last best opportunity for averting climate disaster.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
									
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. east winds 10 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
85°	77°	85°	77°	86°	76°	86°	76°	87°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:34 AM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2021
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

East winds and a few showers were over the Marianas this morning. Only brief showers are expected today and tonight.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.


Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor



onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

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MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 77°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79 °	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 82°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:49 PM
Saturday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	5:50 PM
Monday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:54 AM	3:38 PM
Friday	-	4:43 AM	4:19 PM
Saturday	-	5:34 AM	5:03 PM
Sunday	-	6:26 AM	5:50 PM
Monday	-	7:18 AM	6:40 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Senate votes to raise debt limit by \$2.5T, avoiding default

BUSINESS BRIEFS

UAE suspends talks on \$23B weapons deal with US

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United Arab Emirates on Tuesday suspended talks on a \$23 billion deal to purchase American-made F-35 planes, armed drones and other equipment, in a rare dispute between Washington and a key U.S. ally in the Persian Gulf. The Emirati Embassy in Washington said it would “suspend discussions” with the U.S., though meetings at the Pentagon this week between the two sides on other matters will be held as planned. “The U.S. remains the UAE’s preferred provider for advanced defense requirements and discussions for the F-35 may be re-opened in the future,” the embassy said in a statement. The proposed sale of 50 F-35s to the UAE came at the end of former President Donald Trump’s administration, emerging from a deal that saw the Emiratis formally recognize Israel. President Joe Biden’s administration put the deal on hold after he took office, in part due to criticism of the UAE and Saudi Arabia over their yearslong war in Yemen, which has sparked one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises and continues today. Also included in the deal are 18 advanced drone systems and a package of air-to-air and air-to-ground munitions.

Vegas welcomes a new name: Harry Reid International Airport

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Former U.S. Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada didn’t attend a renaming ceremony on Tuesday making him the namesake of the busy international airport in Las Vegas, but praise was heaped upon him for his foresight and state infrastructure advocacy. “He knew it was the gateway to boosting tourism,” Carlos Monje, U.S. transportation undersecretary, told family members, elected leaders and administrators gathered at the facility known since December 1948 as McCarran International Airport. “By investing in infrastructure all around the Las Vegas Strip, visitors are able to more easily (access) the properties and generate millions and billions of revenue for the state,” Monje said. Reid’s son, former Clark County Commission chairman and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Rory Reid, said his father “regretted not being able to be here” to mark the new name, Harry Reid International Airport, but said he “understands what an incredible honor this is for him.” Rory Reid declined comment later when reached by The Associated Press.

Harvard professor’s trial a test of DOJ’s China prosecutions

BOSTON (AP)—The trial of a Harvard University professor charged with hiding his ties to a Chinese-run recruitment program is the latest bellwether in the U.S. Justice Department’s controversial effort to crackdown on economic espionage by China. Opening statements in the trial of Charles Lieber, the former chair of Harvard’s department of chemistry and chemical biology, begin Wednesday after jury selection was completed Tuesday in Boston federal court. Lieber’s trial is among the highest profile cases to come from the U.S. Department of Justice’s so-called “China Initiative,” which was launched in 2018 under former President Donald Trump but has faced criticism that it harms academic research and amounts to racial profiling of Chinese researchers. Federal prosecutors and Lieber’s defense team didn’t comment Tuesday, but in legal filings ahead of trial, prosecutors said they’ll show Lieber deliberately made false statements about his participation in a Chinese university program to protect his reputation and career.

Wholesale inflation jumps record 9.6% over past 12 months

WASHINGTON (AP)—Prices at the wholesale level surged by a record 9.6% in November from a year earlier, an indication of ongoing inflation pressures. The Labor Department said Tuesday that its producer price index, which measures inflation before it reaches consumers, rose 0.8% in November after a 0.6% monthly gain in October. It was the highest monthly reading in four months. Food prices, which had fallen 0.3% in October, jumped 1.2% in November. Energy prices rose 2.6% after a 5.3% percent rise October. The 12-month increase in wholesale inflation set a new record, surpassing the old records for 12-month increases of 8.6% set in both September and October. The records on wholesale prices go back to 2010.

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate approved legislation Tuesday to lift the nation’s debt limit by \$2.5 trillion under a deal struck between party leaders, defusing a volatile issue until after next year’s midterm elections while saddling majority Democrats with a tough vote.

The 50-49 party line vote came just one day shy of a deadline set by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who warned last month that she was running out of maneuvering room to avoid the nation’s first-ever default. The measure now moves to the House where a vote could come as early as Tuesday night, sending it to President Joe Biden’s desk.

“This is about paying debt accumulated by both parties, so I’m pleased Republicans and Democrats came together,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said of the agreement, which created a workaround that allowed Democrats to avoid a Republican filibuster.

Despite a seemingly straightforward name, the nation’s debt limit does little to curtail future debt. Established

in 1917, it instead serves as a brake on spending decisions already approved by Congress and the White House—some decades ago—that if left unpaid could cripple markets, send the economy into a tailspin and shake global confidence in the U.S.

That hasn’t stopped Republican saber-rattling. For months, they’ve used the debt limit to attack Democrats’ big-spending social and environmental agenda while pledging to staunchly oppose the current effort to increase the threshold. As recently as October, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said he would not “be a party to any future effort to mitigate the consequences of Democratic mismanagement.”

In striking a deal, McConnell backtracked on his word. But he also got much of what he wanted: Democrats taking a politically difficult vote without Republican support, while increasing the limit by a staggering dollar figure that is sure to appear in future attack ads.

“If they jam through another taxing and spending spree this massive debt increase

will just be the beginning,” the Kentucky Republican said Tuesday.

The decision, however, has proven unpopular with some Republicans, particularly Donald Trump.

The former president has railed against the deal repeatedly, calling McConnell a “Broken Old Crow” who “didn’t have the guts to play the Debt Ceiling card, which would have given the Republicans a complete victory on virtually everything.”

“GET RID OF MITCH!” Trump said in a statement issued Sunday.

Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah also criticized the intricate process. Schumer and McConnell agreed to, which he warned could be used in the future to “launder” potentially unpopular votes while bypassing the Senate’s normal mode of operation.

Under the agreement, an amendment was made to an unrelated Medicare bill that passed last week with Republican votes. It created a one-time, fast-track process for raising the debt limit that allowed Democrats to do so

with a simple majority, by-passing the 60 vote threshold to avoid a GOP filibuster.

Lee said the process was intended to make the Republican votes last week “appear as something other than helping Democrats raise the debt ceiling,” which he said Republican leadership “committed, in writing no less, not to do.”

Yet Republican arguments against debt limit increases often ignore inconvenient facts.

The nation’s current debt load of \$28.9 trillion has been racking up for decades. Major drivers include popular spending programs, like Social Security and Medicare, interest on the debt and recent COVID-19 relief packages. But taxation is also a major factor, and a series of tax cuts enacted by Republican presidents in recent decades has added to it, too.

The national debt includes \$7.8 trillion heaped onto the pile during Trump’s four-year presidency, an analysis of Treasury records shows. The GOP-championed 2017 tax cut is projected to add between \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion to the debt, according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center.

Pfizer confirms COVID pill’s results, potency versus omicron

WASHINGTON (AP)—Pfizer said Tuesday that its experimental pill to treat COVID-19 appears effective against the omicron variant.

The company also said full results of its 2,250-person study confirmed the pill’s promising early results against the virus: The drug reduced combined hospitalizations and deaths by about 89% among high-risk adults when taken shortly after initial COVID-19 symptoms.

Separate laboratory testing shows the drug retains its potency against the omicron variant, the company announced, as many experts had predicted. Pfizer tested the antiviral drug against a man-made version of a key protein that omicron uses to reproduce itself.

The updates come as COVID-19 cases, deaths and hospitalization are all rising again and the U.S. topped 800,000 pandemic deaths. The latest surge, driven by the delta variant, is accelerating due to colder weather and more indoor gatherings, even as health officials brace for the impact of the emerging omicron mutant.

The Food and Drug Administration is expected to soon rule on whether to authorize Pfizer’s pill and a competing pill from Merck, which was submitted to regulators several weeks earlier. If granted, the pills would be the first



This undated image provided by Pfizer in November 2021 shows the company’s COVID-19 pills. On Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021, Pfizer said that its experimental COVID-19 pill is effective against the omicron variant and maintained its promising early performance against the virus in final testing. **AP**

COVID-19 treatments that Americans could pick up at a pharmacy and take at home.

President Joe Biden called Pfizer’s drug “another potentially powerful tool in our fight against the virus,” in a statement Tuesday.

The U.S. government has agreed to purchase enough of Pfizer’s drug to treat 10 million people. But company executives have indicated that initial supplies will be limited, with only enough to treat tens of thousands of people before the end of the year. By March Pfizer hopes to ramp up production to provide millions of

courses of treatment.

Pfizer’s data could help reassure regulators of its drug’s effectiveness after Merck disclosed smaller-than-expected benefits for its drug in final testing. Late last month, Merck said that its pill reduced hospitalizations and deaths by 30% in high-risk adults.

Both companies initially studied their drugs in unvaccinated adults who face the gravest risks from COVID-19, due to older age or health problems, such as asthma or obesity.

Pfizer is also studying its pill in lower-risk adults—including a subset who are vac-

inated—but reported mixed data for that group on Tuesday.

In interim results, Pfizer said its drug failed to meet its main study goal: sustained relief from COVID-19 for four days during or after treatment, as reported by patients. But the drug did achieve a second goal by reducing hospitalizations by about 70% among that group, which included otherwise healthy unvaccinated adults and vaccinated adults with one or more health issues. Less than 1% of patients who got the drug were hospitalized, compared with 2.4% of patients who got a dummy pill.

Nation

COVID toll hits 800,000 to close out year filled with death

MISSION, Kan. (AP)—Carolyn Burnett is bracing for her first Christmas without her son Chris, a beloved high school football coach whose outdoor memorial service drew a crowd of hundreds.

The unvaccinated 34-year-old father of four died in September as a result of COVID-19 after nearly two weeks on a ventilator, and his loss has left a gaping hole for his mother, widow and family as the holidays approach.

How, she thought, could they take a holiday photo without Chris? What would Christmas Day football be like without him offering up commentary? How could they play trivia games on Christmas Eve without him beating everyone with his movie expertise?

The U.S. on Tuesday hit another depressing pandemic milestone—800,000 deaths. It's a sad coda to a year that held so much promise with the arrival of vaccines but is ending in heartbreak for the many grieving families trying to navigate the holiday season.

For its Christmas card photo, the Burnett family ultimately opted to hold up a football presented as a memorial by the Kansas City Chiefs to represent Chris. Carolyn Burnett also set up a special shelf for the holidays, fill-



Carolyn Burnett sorts through mementos to select items to commemorate her son Chris Burnett on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, in Olathe, Kan. AP

ing it with a drawing of her son, his bronzed baby shoe, a candle, a poem and an ornament of Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

But nothing feels quite right this year.

"These emotions come and go so quickly," she said. "You see something. You hear

something. His favorite food. You hear the song. There's just all these little things. And then, bam."

The year began with the COVID-19 death toll at about 350,000 in the U.S., at a time when the country was in the throes of a winter surge so bad that patients were lined up in

emergency room hallways waiting for beds.

But vaccines were just getting rolled out, and sports stadiums and fairgrounds were quickly transformed into mass vaccination sites. Case numbers began falling. By spring, nearly all schools had

reopened and communities were shedding mask orders. TV newscasters began talking cheerfully about a post-pandemic world. President Joe Biden proclaimed the Fourth of July holiday as a celebration of the nation's freedom from the virus.

It didn't last long. The delta variant struck just as vaccination rates were stalling amid a wave of misinformation, devastating poorly immunized portions of the Midwest and South. Hospitals brought back mobile morgues and opened up their pocket books in a desperate bid to attract enough nurses to care for the sick.

"People have no idea," said Debbie Eaves, a lab worker, who grew weary of the wave of death as she collected swabs from patients at Oakdale Community Hospital in Louisiana amid the surge. "Oh, no. They have no idea what it is to look and see, to see it."

In Kansas, Carolyn Burnett begged her son, who went by the nickname Coach Cheese because of his love of cheeseburgers, to get vaccinated.

"He was a part of the group that ... just didn't trust it," she said, pausing and sighing. "They didn't want to be a guinea pig. They didn't want to be experimented on."

She thought maybe he was softening. When his dad got his first COVID-19 shot in August, Chris, a diabetic, told his mother he would discuss it with his doctor. But then one of Chris' children got infected at a family sleepover and soon everyone was sick.

OJ Simpson a 'completely free man'; parole ends in Nevada

LAS VEGAS (AP)—O.J. Simpson is a free man.

The 74-year-old former football hero and actor, acquitted California murder defendant and convicted Las Vegas armed robber was granted good behavior credits and discharged from parole effective Dec. 1, Nevada State Police spokeswoman Kim Yoko Smith said Tuesday.

"Mr. Simpson is a completely free man now," said Malcolm LaVergne, Simpson's lawyer in Las Vegas.

Simpson declined an immediate interview, LaVergne said, and the attorney declined to talk about Simpson's future plans, including whether he intends to remain in Nevada.

Simpson had told parole officials before his Oct. 1, 2017, release from prison that he planned to move to Florida.

He instead moved to a gated community in Las Vegas, where he plays golf and frequently takes to Twitter to offer opinions about college and pro sports, especially football.

"Life is fine," he told The Associated Press during a June 2019 interview.

Simpson's saga makes him, in the words of one of his Las Vegas trial lawyers, one of the most famous people on the planet.

He grew up in public housing in San Francisco, attended the University of Southern California and won the Heisman Trophy as college football's best player in 1968. He became an NFL Hall of Famer and the first running back to gain 2,000 yards in a season with the Buffalo Bills in 1973. He acted in movies and served as a rent-a-car company pitchman and a football commentator.

In what became known as "The Trial of the Century," he was acquitted in 1995 of the double slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

The trial was the focus of gavel-to-gavel TV coverage, with Simpson represented by a legal "Dream Team" that included the late Johnnie Cochran Jr. and F. Lee Bailey.

In a separate case more than a decade later, Simpson was

convicted by a jury in Las Vegas and sentenced to prison for leading five men, including two with guns, in a 2007 confrontation with two sports collectibles dealers in a cramped room at an off-strip Las Vegas casino hotel.

Simpson insisted he only wanted to retrieve personal mementoes and items stolen from him following his acquittal in the double killings.

He had been found liable for the deaths in 1997 by a California civil court jury that ordered him to pay \$33.5 million to victims' families.

Simpson served nine years in a Nevada prison for armed robbery.

His original parole discharge date was Sept. 29, 2022. By last summer, that date had been moved up for good behavior to Feb. 9. The Nevada Board of Parole majority that ultimately granted his early discharge after a Nov. 30 hearing cut his term by about three more months for good behavior.



Simpson

NASA craft 'touches' sun for 1st time, dives into atmosphere

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—A NASA spacecraft has officially "touched" the sun, plunging through the unexplored solar atmosphere known as the corona.

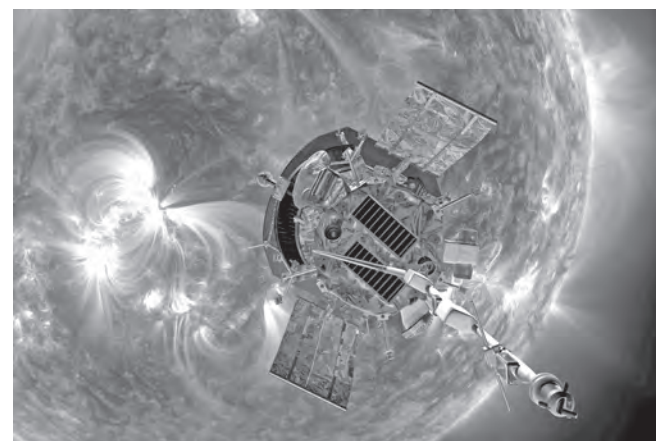
Scientists announced the news Tuesday during a meeting of the American Geophysical Union.

The Parker Solar Probe actually flew through the corona in April during the spacecraft's eighth close approach to the sun. Scientists said it took a few months to get the data back and then several more months to confirm.

"Fascinatingly exciting," said project scientist Nour Raouafi of Johns Hopkins University.

Launched in 2018, Parker was 8 million miles (13 million kilometers) from the center of the sun when it first crossed the jagged, uneven boundary between the solar atmosphere and outgoing solar wind. The spacecraft dipped in and out of the corona at least three times, each a smooth transition, according to scientists.

"The first and most dramatic time we were below for about five hours ... Now you might think five hours,



This image made available by NASA shows an artist's rendering of the Parker Solar Probe approaching the Sun. AP

that doesn't sound big," the University of Michigan's Justin Kasper told reporters. But he noted that Parker was moving so fast it covered a vast distance during that time, tearing along at more than 62 miles (100 kilometers) per second.

The corona appeared dustier than expected, according to Raouafi. Future coronal excursions will help scientist better understand the origin of the solar wind, he said, and how it is heated and accelerated out into space. Because the sun lacks a solid surface, the corona is where the action is;

exploring this magnetically intense region up close can help scientists better understand solar outbursts that can interfere with life here on Earth.

Preliminary data suggest Parker also dipped into the corona during its ninth close approach in August, but scientists said more analyses are needed. It made its 10th close approach last month.

Parker will keep drawing ever closer to the sun and diving deeper into the corona until its grand finale orbit in 2025.

The latest findings were also published by the American Physical Society.

Asia

Philippine leader quits from Senate race in latest flip-flop

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday withdrew his senatorial candidacy in next year's elections in his latest change of mind over what he plans to do after his turbulent term ends, when critics say he would likely face an array of lawsuits for an anti-drugs crackdown that has left thousands of mostly petty suspects killed.

Accompanied by his executive secretary and security escorts, the 76-year-old Duterte went to the Commission on Elections in Manila and withdrew as a senatorial candidate. His former aide, Sen. Bong Go, separately appeared at the elections commission earlier Tuesday to withdraw his presidential candidacy, which he said his family opposed.

Duterte did not give any reason for the move but his spokesman, Karlo Nograles, said it would allow the president to better focus on man-

aging the pandemic in the country and ensuring that the May elections would be peaceful and orderly.

Known for his extra tough approach to criminality, Duterte launched a police-enforced campaign against illegal drugs when he took office in June 2016. The crackdown has left more than 6,000 mostly petty suspects dead based on police figures.

Manila-based analyst Richard Heydarian, however, said Duterte's latest move showed how the president, who faces potential criminal suits after his presidency for his deadly anti-drugs campaign, seemed to have lost his political footing after his plan to ensure a friendly succession next year caved in.

"Duterte is really scrambling for any kind of leverage in next year's elections," Heydarian said. "His initial plan to engineer a succession for one of his anointed successors is



Duterte

now totally out of the window."

Duterte initially wanted his daughter, Mayor Sara Duterte of southern Davao city, to succeed him but she refused to run for the presidency amid unspecified differences with her father. She later decided on her own to run as the vice-presidential running mate of Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of the late Philippine dictator.

The president later encouraged Go, his former longtime aide who is now a senator, to run for president. But Go eventually backed out, saying he did not aspire to be president and that his family opposed his presidential candidacy.

Duterte originally considered running for the vice presidency but later dropped the plan, saying he planned to retire when his term ends and added that surveys showed most Filipinos did not support such a move.

SKorea sets new virus record; restrictions eyed

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Halting its steps toward normalcy, South Korea will clamp down on social gatherings and cut the hours of some businesses to fight a record-breaking surge of the coronavirus that has led to a spike in hospitalizations and deaths.

Prime Minister Kim Booyum confirmed the government's intent to restore stricter social distancing measures during a virus meeting on Wednesday as the country set another new one-day record in infections with 7,850 cases, the fourth time this month the daily tally exceeded 7,000.

The country's death toll is now 4,456 after 70 virus

patients died in the past 24 hours, while a record 964 patients were in critical or serious condition. Officials previously said the country's medical system could buckle if the number of serious cases topped 1,000 because it would greatly hamper hospitals' ability to respond not only to COVID-19 but also to other medical conditions.

"The government sees the current virus situation as serious and plans to enforce stronger social distancing measures," said Kim, Seoul's No. 2 behind President Moon Jae-in. "We are considering measures that include further reducing the size of allowable social gatherings and imposing business-hour

restrictions, and these steps will be confirmed and announced soon."

Some expect the new measures could be announced as early as Friday.

The virus surge has been a rude awakening for South Korea, which significantly eased social distancing rules and fully reopened schools in November in what officials had described as a first step toward restoring pre-pandemic normalcy.

In allowing larger social gatherings and lifting limits on indoor dining hours, officials had hoped that improving vaccination rates would suppress hospitalizations and deaths even if the virus continues to spread.

China detects 2nd case of omicron variant

BEIJING (AP)—China has detected its second case of the omicron variant in a 67-year-old man who tested positive after more than two weeks of quarantine, official media reported Tuesday.

State broadcaster CCTV said the man returned from overseas on Nov. 27 and underwent two weeks of isolation, during which he repeatedly tested negative for the virus.

On Saturday, he flew to the southern city of Guangzhou where he maintains a residence and began another week

of self-quarantining at home.

A day later he underwent a routine test and early on Monday, the district health department informed authorities he had tested positive for the virus, the station reported.

Further investigation at the city and provincial level determined he was infected with omicron, it said.

On Monday, authorities announced the first case of omicron in a person who arrived on a flight from Europe earlier this month and tested positive on Thursday while in quarantine. Poland's

Health Ministry said Tuesday the traveler was a Polish teenager who flew from Warsaw to China.

Ministry spokesman Wojciech Andrusiewicz said the teenager, who traveled with her mother, was hospitalized in isolation. She shows no symptoms of illness. The teenager is in isolation in the northern port city of Tianjin, according to Chinese health authorities.

China has largely contained the spread of COVID-19 since it was first detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019.

World



Firefighters stand next to what remains of a truck that was carrying gasoline after it overturned and exploded in Cap-Haitien, Haiti, Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021. **AP**

New Haiti disaster: Fireball from toppled tanker kills 75

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti (AP)—With fuel in short supply all across Haiti, some neighbors in the northern city of Cap-Haitien saw the crash of a tanker truck as a chance to scoop up valuable spilled gasoline. But then the truck exploded, unleashing a fireball that swept across people and homes, and local officials say at least 75 people died.

Early reports indicate that the tanker was trying to avoid an oncoming motorcycle when it veered and flipped early Tuesday.

Onlookers then rushed to the scene with buckets to collect what they could of the tanker's cargo, likely for sale on the black market, as the fuel drained toward a nearby pile of smoldering trash.

"It was after midnight and I heard a loud noise so I asked one of my boys to go and look. He told me a gasoline truck exploded," said Abraham Joanis, 61, as he carried a guitar rescued from the charred remains

of his home, one of about 50 gutted by the blaze.

Hours after the blast, buildings and overturned vehicles were still smoking as firefighters covered burned bodies in white sheets and loaded them onto the back of a construction truck.

"It's horrible what happened," said Patrick Almonor, deputy mayor of Cap-Haitien, the country's second-largest city, who said late Tuesday that 75 people had died. "We lost so many lives."

Burn victims screamed in agony as they pleaded for help at Justinian University Hospital, the city's largest.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry, himself a physician, visited there as victims bandaged head to toe were fighting for their lives amid a shortage of medical supplies and health workers in an impoverished nation that has been bombarded by disasters in recent months—riots, a wave of kidnappings, a powerful earthquake that

killed more than 2,200 people and the July 7 assassination of the president.

Among survivors who spoke with the prime minister was Riche Joseph, who spent hours on the hospital's floor connected to an IV while he waited for a bed.

His sister, Bruna Lourdes, said her brother stepped out of the house late at night to look for something to eat. When she heard the explosion, she rushed down from the hillside shantytown in panic.

"I'm praying to God that he won't take his life," said Lourdes, who is studying to be a nurse and planned to spend the night by her brother's side to offer whatever assistance she can to the overstretched medical staff.

Henry, wearing a biohazard suit, clasped his hands and leaned over to console one man collapsed on the hospital's concrete floor because there were not enough beds in the historic city's largest hospital.

French military finally leaves Timbuktu

BAMAKO, Mali (AP)—French forces left the city of Timbuktu late Tuesday, the latest sign that the former colonial power is drawing down its presence in northern Mali nearly nine years after driving Islamic extremists from power there in a military intervention.

The symbolic move comes amid fears about whether the Malian military can now step in and fend off the extremists, who have regrouped and expanded their reach even further southward since the 2013 offensive.

In a communique, the French military emphasized

late Tuesday that the Malian military maintains "a strong garrison in Timbuktu," in addition to nearly 2,200 U.N. peacekeepers who are permanently deployed there.

Residents told The Associated Press late Tuesday that the Malian military has occupied the former French military base.

The French military already has shut down its bases further north in Kidal and Tessalit but is maintaining its presence in Gao near a volatile border region where operations have been concentrated in recent years.

France announced ear-

lier this year that it would be withdrawing more than 2,000 troops from the Sahel by early 2022, refocusing its military efforts on neutralizing extremist operations, and strengthening and training local armies.

The decision came amid mounting political instability in Mali, where Col. Assimi Goita carried out two coups in less than a year's time before being sworn in as the country's interim president. The international community has set a deadline for new democratic elections to be held by the end of February, though there are growing signs that will not happen.

Environment

Precinct 2 sets yearend village cleanup



By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

The end-of-the-year village cleanup at Precinct 2 started brightly as volunteers from the Saipan Centennial Lions Club, as well as many others in the community, gathered last Saturday to pick up trash along Sugar Dock Beach, Susupe Beach, and Texas Road.

"We all can do our part to keep our villages clean, safe, and beautiful," Rep. Tina Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview, adding that the village cleanup is one of many volunteer outreach opportunities that members of the Legislature have been involved in over the past few years.

The Lions Club, on the other hand, volunteered in line with their five-year Public Private Partnership agreement to adopt Sugar Dock beach, with an objective to do beach cleanups and dispose of debris, among others.

Saipan Centennial Lions Club immediate past president Araceli Lizama said that once or twice a month, their group conducts a beach cleanup, ensuring that the cleanliness of their adopted pavilion is maintained, and that there are no trash in the beach.

"I want the community to be



aware of their trash; put them in the trash bin. Don't throw empty bottles and cans in the ocean. What we are doing is to protect our environment and maintain the cleanliness of our beach," Lizama added.

Recognizing the difficulty some families have in accessing regular garbage collection, as well as other solid waste issues like junk car dumping and litter piling up, Sablan and her colleagues at the Legislature worked with the Mayor's Office, community partners such as school groups and volunteer organizations

to address the concerns.

Precinct 2 residents are encouraged to clean around their homes and bring the trash they will be able to collect this Saturday, Dec. 18, to a central bin that will be placed just south of the Chalan Kanoa cemetery on Texas Road, from 8am to 12pm.

Only household waste and roadside litter will be accepted. No hazardous materials, junk appliances, tires, green waste, or similar items will be accepted.

"The idea for this outreach project is to end 2021 and ring in the

Volunteers and members of the Saipan Centennial Lions Club gather Saturday to pick up trash along Sugar Dock Beach, Susupe Beach, and Texas Road, as part of the end-of-the-year village cleanup at Precinct 2. This Saturday, residents at the Precinct are encouraged to clean around their homes and a central bin will be placed south of the Chalan Kanoa cemetery on Texas Road, from 8am to 12pm where they could load their trash.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

new year by showing some extra love and care for our villages, and the places where we live, work, and play," Sablan said.

For more information, or to ask for assistance with trash pickup on Saturday, call Sablan's office at 664 8829 or 285 5392.

US study: Record highs, rain and beaver damage in Arctic

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP SCIENCE WRITER

The Arctic continues to deteriorate from global warming, not setting as many records this year as in the past, but still changing so rapidly that federal scientists call it alarming in their annual Arctic report card.

The 16th straight health check for the northern polar region spotlighted the first ever rainfall at Greenland summit station, record warm temperatures between October and December 2020, and the new problem of expansion of beavers in the Arctic.

"The trends are consistent, alarming and undeniable," U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration chief Rick Spinrad said presenting the findings by 111 scientists from 12 countries at the American Geophysical Union conference Tuesday. "The loss of the great white cap that once covered the top of the world is one of the most iconic indicators of climate change."

"The Arctic is Earth's air conditioning," Spinrad said. "Billions of people rely on its moderating influence on climate. We have a narrow window of time to avoid very costly, deadly and irreversible future climate impacts."

The 2020-2021 polar year—scientists study the Arctic on a yearly basis from October to September—was only the 7th warmest on record. However, October to December in 2020 set a record for

the warmest autumn.

This report card comes out as the Arctic warms two to three times faster than the rest of the planet. The region's melting ice opens the door to more pressures, including the potential for more oil and gas drilling and more mining and more tensions between countries wanting to exploit the area. For the people who live there, it means having to adapt to a ground that is getting softer as permafrost melts and changes to traditional hunting and fishing.

"It's really tough for us to live up there, let alone thrive," said report co-author Kaare Sikuaq Erickson, a community science liaison from the Bering Sea village of Unalakleet.

When sea ice hit its annual minimum in September for how far it extends, it was only the 12th lowest on record. But the rarer thick sea ice, which stays around for more than a year, was the second lowest at the end of the summer since records began in 1985, reflecting a problem in the more crucial type of ice for the Arctic.

"The sea ice loss in the Bering Sea is extremely, extremely scary," Erickson said. "It's an ecosystem collapse situation. I think the sea ice loss in my region is probably the biggest concern."

Report editor Twila Moon, a scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center, said people may think "if something is not setting a brand new record, then it's going pretty well. And that is not true."

UN weather agency affirms 2020 Arctic heat record in Siberia

GENEVA (AP)—The U.N. weather agency said Tuesday it has certified a 38-degree Celsius (100.4 Fahrenheit) reading in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk last year as the highest temperature ever recorded in the Arctic, the latest in a string of "alarm bells about our changing climate."

The World Meteorological Organization said the temperature "more befitting the Mediterranean than the Arctic" was registered on June 20, 2020, during a heat wave that swept across Siberia and stretched north of the Arctic Circle.

Average temperatures were up to 10 degrees Celsius more than usual in Arctic Siberia, playing a key role in forest fires, loss of sea ice and global temperature rises that made 2020 one

of the three hottest years on record.

"This new Arctic record is one of a series of observations reported to the WMO Archive of Weather and Climate Extremes that sound the alarm bells about our changing climate," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas in a statement.

Verkhoyansk is about 115 kilometers (70 miles) north of the Arctic Circle and a meteorological station there has been observing temperatures since 1885, WMO said.

Spokeswoman Clare Nullis said the record reading was the first of its kind in a new category of Arctic temperature monitoring, so there was no previous record to compare it with. But 38 degrees has never been seen before in the Arctic, she said.

WMO is looking into a number of possible heat records, including 54.4 Celsius (129.9 Fahrenheit) recorded both this year and last in Death Valley, California, which could be a worldwide record high temperature reading, and 48.8 Celsius (119.8 Fahrenheit) on Italy's southern island of Sicily this summer—which could be the hottest temperature ever recorded in Europe.

Taalas said WMO has never had so many investigations of possible heat records going at the same time, and they take time to verify. The agency says the Arctic is among the fastest-warming regions of the world and is heating up at rates twice those of the global average.

Life & Style



This combination photo shows the eight AP breakthrough entertainers of the year: From left, Damson Idris, Anupam Tripathi, Rachel Zegler, Rauw Alejandro, Adrienne Warren, Saweetie, Simu Liu, and Sydney Sweeney. AP

The AP names its Breakthrough Entertainers of 2021

If 2020 was a pandemic-induced pause, 2021 was when things started up again, albeit slowly and timidly. But that doesn't describe this year's eight Associated Press' Breakthrough Entertainers of the Year: They seized their masks—and the moment.

They are Damson Idris, Simu Liu, Rachel Zegler, Rauw Alejandro, Adrienne Warren, Saweetie, Anupam Tripathi and Sydney Sweeney. Each found ways to share their art despite virus fears and variants.

The year went quickly for Zegler, who had beat out thousands for the part of Maria in

Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story." The pandemic pushed the film's release a year but she didn't stop.

Zegler was cast in and filmed the sequel to "Shazam" and snagged the role of Snow White in the live-action reimagining with Gal Gadot playing the evil queen. Then there was all the press for "West Side Story" and even a Met Gala invite. "I stepped out of my comfort zone," she says.

Liu smashed through the Marvel Cinematic Universe's comfort zone as its first Asian-led superhero stand-alone in "Shang-Chi and the Legend

of the Ten Rings." His was a career-making turn as Shang-Chi, who combines Spider-Man's aw-shucks sweetness with lethal fists.

The path Tripathi took was far slower. For more than a decade, the Indian actor who relocated to South Korea more than a decade ago, spent countless hours singing in humble theaters and taking on minor film gigs. Then came "Squid Game" and sudden, massive popularity.

The pandemic stopped live theater in its tracks, so Adrienne Warren pivoted. While waiting for Broadway to restart, she turned to a project

she never would have been able had she still been starring in the title role in "Tina—The Tina Turner Musical."

Warren lost and gained 30 pounds to play civil rights catalyst Mamie Till-Mobley—whose son Emmett Till was brutally murdered in the Jim Crow South—in the upcoming ABC series "Women of the Movement." She co-founded the Broadway Advocacy Coalition, which uses storytelling to dismantle the systems that perpetuate racism. And when Broadway resumed, she came back to earn her first Tony Award.

Idris' popularity has grown

exponentially over the past four seasons of the critically-acclaimed series "Snowfall." His breakthrough role landed him other opportunities including "The Twilight Zone," "Black Mirror," "Farming" and Netflix's "Outside the Wire."

Sweeney sealed her stardom in 2021 with major roles in the hit HBO miniseries, "The White Lotus," and Amazon's sexy psychological thriller, "The Voyeurs." She also filmed the hotly anticipated second season of "Euphoria," which drops in January. On top of all that, Sweeney also started her

own production company.

Bay Area-rapper Saweetie had landed three Top 40 hits in the last three years but in 2021 she earned two Grammy nods, made her debut on "SNL" and hosted the MTV Europe Music Awards in Hungary.

Like her, Alejandro has been on the rise for the past few years, but 2021 catapulted him into another level of success—five songs in the top 50, sold out shows and Grammy recognition. "This year has been my best, and I hope the next one surpasses this one," he says, something his other nominees might agree with. (AP)

NY ethics board tells former Gov. Cuomo to return book money

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—Former Gov. Andrew Cuomo was ordered by New York's ethics commission Tuesday to give up millions of dollars a publisher paid him to write a book about his response to the coronavirus pandemic.

An attorney for Cuomo immediately called the action unconstitutional and promised a fight.



Cuomo

Cuomo was directed to turn over proceeds earned from "American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic" within 30 days under a resolution approved 12-1 by the Joint Com-

mission on Public Ethics.

The order came a month after the commission voted to rescind the ethics approval it had given Cuomo as he entered into the \$5.1 million book deal.

"American Crisis" was published in October 2020, months before Cuomo resigned amid allegations he sexually harassed at least 11 women. It

was published by Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House.

The staff of the commission granted approval of the deal in July 2020, when his counsel told the commission Cuomo agreed to not use any state personnel or resources to produce his book and that he would write it "entirely on his own time." But complaints lat-

er surfaced that state property, resources and personnel were used to prepare, write, edit and publish the book.

Cuomo has acknowledged that state employees helped with tasks including editing the manuscript. But he's claimed that those employees were volunteering their private time.

Cuomo's camp promptly challenged the commission's

authority, setting up what could be a lengthy legal battle.

"JCOPE's actions today are unconstitutional, exceed its own authority and appear to be driven by political interests rather than the facts and the law," Cuomo attorney Jim McGuire said in a prepared statement. "Should they seek to enforce this action, we'll see them in court."

Weight loss doesn't take sting out of observations

DEAR ABBY: During the last year, I made some significant changes to my life. I left an emotionally abusive marriage after 23 years, which gave me the confidence to take better care of myself. I have lost 70 pounds and am almost down to the weight I was in high school. I am very proud of this.

My issue is my family has now started using my former weight as a measuring stick. I am often told things like, "You should see your cousin. She's almost as big as you were!" which is quickly followed by an offhand, "No offense," which tells me they know it offends me. I said as much to them at first, but the insulting comparisons continue.

It's not just one person saying this; it has actually become the family standard. I know I was very large, but this is extremely hurtful. I find myself avoiding family visits because the subject seems to invariably come up in some way. Is there anything beyond what I have already tried that can convey the distress this causes?

FORMER FAT RELATIVE IN MISSOURI

DEAR RELATIVE: Your relatives have been told that alluding to your former weight problem causes you distress.

That it continues tells me they are thoughtless at best, not to mention rude and inconsiderate of your feelings. Because you can't change their behavior (and neither can I), the logical solution is to do what is best for you and see less of them.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have begun high school and I love it, but I'm bumping into friend problems. My new friend has many other friends in one big friend group, and she's inviting me to join them. I barely know these people, and some of them make me uncomfortable, but I still eat lunch with them sometimes. I don't want to be rude to my friend, but I am unsure if I want to join this group.

I have a separate friend whom I met in middle school, and I have reason to believe that I am his only friend. He eats lunch with me and my upperclassmen friends. They ignore him while he talks to me about the things we like. I am afraid I'm hurting him by making more friends. Any advice?

STRESSED TEEN IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR TEEN: New relationships take time to develop. With time, as you and your new classmates get to know each other better, you may feel more comfortable with them. If that doesn't happen, you may want to make other plans for lunch.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



That you have been including your middle school friend during those lunches I think is loyal, caring and compassionate. Doing so is not "hurting" him. If he's unable to integrate and become part of the group, no law says the two of you must have lunch with those people every single day. Consider alternating lunches with other students so you can widen your circle of friends. Friends are treasures. The more of them you have, the richer your life will be.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

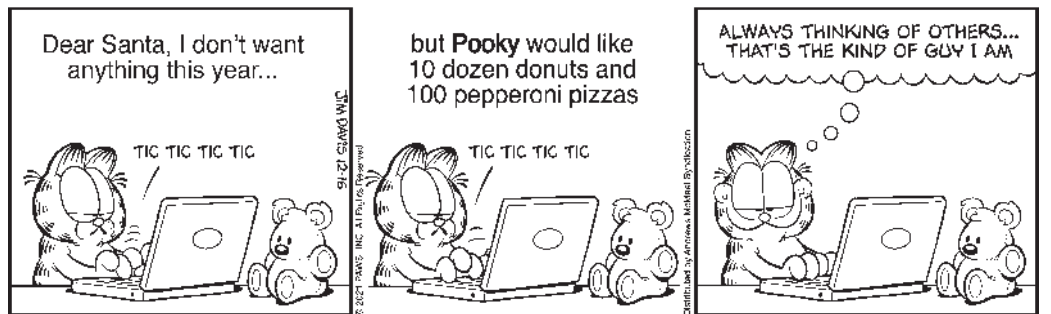
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Male deer
5 Stitch
8 Jrs.' exam
12 "Heavens!"
13 "The Matrix" role
14 —
15 Hurt severely
16 Artist Yoko
17 Vocal quality
18 Painter Wyeth
20 Imperfect
22 MGM motto start
23 And so on (Abbr.)
24 Craving
27 Momentous
32 Hostel
33 Have
34 Rap sheet abbr.
35 "Ta-ta!"
38 Trucker with a handle

DOWN

39 Misery
40 One of the five W's
42 Harry Potter's owl
45 Like Jell-O shots
49 Monster (never)
50 Aussie hopper
52 Lamb alias
53 Combine
54 City area, for short
55 Bottle part
56 Ways to the WWW
57 Derek and Diddle
58 Casual tops
1 "Brave New World"
2 Compared to
3 During
4 Avid exerciser
5 Arctic footwear
6 Poetic dusk
7 Bark
8 Spud
9 Alaskan shellfish
10 Green Gables girl
11 Three— sloth
19 Hosp. triage area
21 Rent out
24 Torched
25 Popular card game
26 Amaryllis cousin
28 — Jima
29 Big cons
30 Mamie's man
31 One for the road?
36 Wooden rods
37 Luau necklace
38 Persuasive
41 "Greetings!"
42 Arizona tribe
43 Freudian topics
44 Chow
46 Jubilation
47 Grown-up nits
48 Talks nonstop
51 Acapulco gold

Solution time: 24 mins.

T	S	A	R	D	V	D	E	B	A	Y
A	P	S	F	E	F	F	E	A	C	F
R	A	S	S	C	F	F	I	R	M	A
U	N	I	F	E	T	R	A	C	F	S
D	E	B	T	S	L	A	V	U	S	O
Q	W	L	C	A	C	H	E	E	R	G
T	E	A	E	S	A	I	O	S	L	O
L	I	K	E	S	O	A	E	S	O	P
I	N	C	A	B	E	E	R	C	A	N
A	T	A	D	E	T	E	A	V	E	S
R	C	S	Y	S	L	R	E	S	T	

Yesterday's answer 12-16

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hallee Hirsh, 34; Krysten Ritter, 40; J.B. Smoove, 56; Billy Gibbons, 72.

Happy Birthday: Keep your life simple, and channel your energy into what matters and will bring the highest return. Refuse to let the little things get to you. Moderation in all aspects of life will help you avoid being vulnerable and maintain balance and security emotionally, financially and physically. Aim for comfort, convenience and peace of mind. Your numbers are 4, 11, 18, 20, 28, 37, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Say little and do a lot. Focus on your responsibilities, and do the best job. Keep your spending to a minimum, and you'll feel less stressed about the future. Implement a better health routine. Fitness and diet will promote productivity. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Refuse to let your emotions lead you down the wrong path. An offer will give you something to think about. Don't lose sight of your dreams because someone isn't offering moral support. Speak up, iron out differences and forge ahead. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You have more opportunities than you think. Check out possibilities, and take advantage of a situation that can help you excel. Mingle, network and look for ways to stabilize your future. Let go of the past, and embrace new beginnings. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): A proposal will grab your attention. Don't dance around the subject or be quick to reply, or you may hurt someone's feelings. Honesty will save you from an unnecessary situation. The

answer is a simple yes or no. Be direct and diplomatic. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Step things up a notch. Keep moving until you are satisfied with the results. Last-minute shopping, festive events and taking care of year-end paperwork are priorities if you want to enjoy a little downtime with loved ones. ****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't get all worked up over something inconsequential. Emotions will run high when friends, family or colleagues get together. Simplify matters by maintaining equality and avoiding indulgence. Keep in mind that words and truth matter. Focus on kindness, not chaos. **

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Take good care of your health, home and family. Leave nothing undone. Get in high gear and focus on what makes the most sense. Preparation is critical when it comes to pleasing others. Protect what you have, and you'll have no regrets. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Emotions will change quickly regarding situations that require cooperation. Find a way to compromise before things run amok. Use your intelligence by making an offer that's hard to refuse. Give a little, and you'll gain respect and get good results. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): A disciplined attitude will help you get everything done on time. Be thorough when it comes to shared expenses and gift-giving. Make sure you are aware of hidden costs before you commit to something you cannot afford. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Jump in, participate and get things done. Tidy up, decorate your space, get into the festive season and do something that brings you joy. Home improvement, romance and personal growth are favored and will boost your morale. Live, love, laugh. *****



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Control your emotions when dealing with a friend, relative or lover. If you overreact, take on more than you can handle or make a change no one else wants, you will face the consequences. Be smart and do what's best for everyone. **



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Touch base with someone who inspires you. Discussions will prompt you to search for a partnership with someone trying to achieve similar goals. Sharing ideas will save time and energy and encourage success. Physical improvements and romance are in your best interest. ****

Birthday Baby: You are generous, proactive and energetic. You are extravagant and convincing.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

7		1		5		9		
	6			7		8		
				1		4		
4		5		1				
	3					4		
5			1					
	7			5		6		
6			4		2	5		

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/16

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	9	1	8	6	5	7	3	4
5	6	4	7	3	9	8	1	2
7	8	3	2	4	1	9	6	5
8	2	9	5	7	6	1	4	3
3	5	6	1	8	4	2	9	7
4	1	7	3	9	2	5	8	6
9	3	5	4	2	8	6	7	1
1	4	8	6	5	7	3	2	9
6	7	2	9	1	3	4	5	8

Difficulty Level: ★★★

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

HAIR FRIZZ SOLUTIONS

Solution: 7 letters

H T Y S K E R A T I N B S S S
S B S I L K S H E D H I H P T
S P R I E O L I V E O I L Y
T N M O M D E A H N W T N R L
I U O U S I R P E E T I E E E
F B L M P B R G R N A N N T Y
F O S R E M A R E O S L N D P
V N L D E L A M O A L E T U S
D U R L L T N D V R M O R H H
R T U O I O A T I T I I C U A
I R C C R C O W N R F N H T M
Z I Y I O W L I E Y A E S A P
Z E V V E T O E G E C G A E O
L N A L A R U T A N U G W H O
E T W E A T H E R U T S I O M

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12/16

Absorb, Arid, Avocado, Biotin, Braid, Bun, Cold, Collagen, Color, Curls, Cut, Damp, Drizzle, Eggs, Environment, Foilicle, Health, Heat, Honey, Keratin, Lemon, Milk, Mirror, Mist, Moisture, Natural, Nutrient, Ointment, Olive Oil, Pumps, Purify, Rinse, Serum, Shampoo, Shed, Shine, Shower, Silk, Sleep, Stiff, Style, Tips, Towel, Vinegar, Volume, Wash, Water, Wavy, Weather, Wind

Yesterday's Answer: Fishing

The NEW Treasury 43 can be purchased online at

www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6430.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Curry gets NBA record for 3-pointers, Warriors beat Knicks



NEW YORK (AP)—Stephen Curry would have loved to set the record for career 3-pointers in front of his Bay Area fans.

Doing it in front of his family and Ray Allen and Reggie Miller—guys who used to hold the record—and an adoring crowd at Madison Square Garden wasn't bad, though.

"If you can't do it at home, this is definitely a great Plan B," Curry said Tuesday night.

Three of Curry's 22 points gave him that title of NBA career leader for 3-pointers on a night the Golden State Warriors beat the New York Knicks 105-96.

Curry made his 2,974th 3-pointer with 7:33 left in the first quarter, followed by a lengthy celebration inside Madison Square Garden where he hugged his parents, teammates and Allen, whose record stood for 10 years.

"I thought the night was perfect," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr, who called time-out after the record shot to make room for a celebration. "It just pretty much encapsulated who he is and his reaction to it was perfect."

Curry's record could last much longer, as he is taking and making 3s better than anyone in basketball. He came in averaging a career-high 5.4 per game and went 5 for 14 Tuesday, giving him a league-leading 145. Nobody else had made 100 entering play Tuesday.

Teammate Draymond Green, wearing a shirt with Curry on the front after the game, said the guard could end up beating the record by 1,000 or more.

"Steph is the best to ever shoot a basketball and we get the opportunity to go to work with him every day and it's a very special thing," Green said.

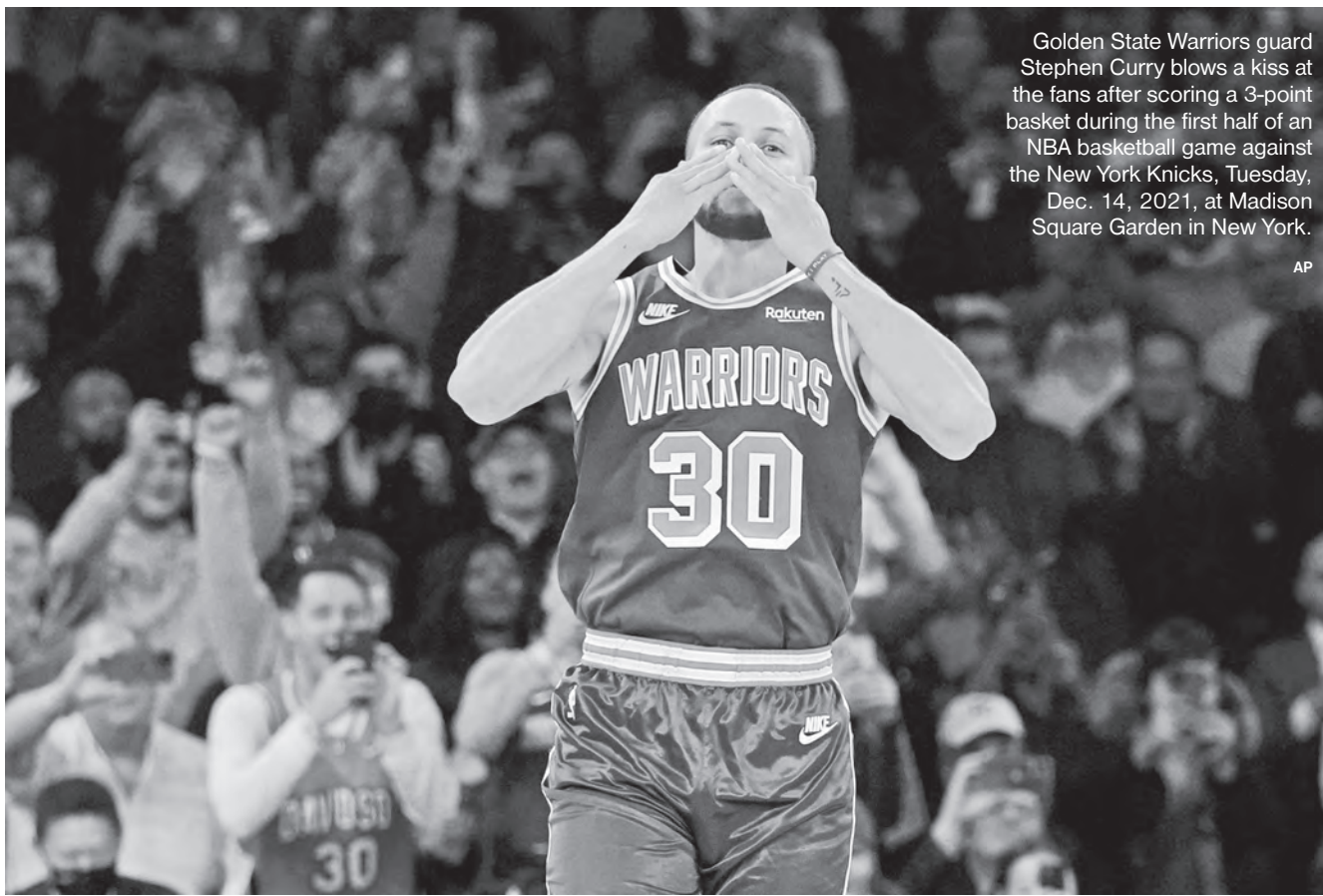
Curry, who set the record on the same Madison Square Garden court where he had a 54-point game in 2013 before becoming the NBA's two-time MVP, has led the league in 3-pointers six times.

His team showed why it could make him a four-time champion with another lockdown defensive effort, limiting the Knicks to 36% shooting while improving the NBA's best record to 23-5.

"You can see who they are," Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said.

Jordan Poole had 19 points and nine rebounds, going 13 for 13 on free throws to overcome a 3-for-11 night from the field. Green added eight points, 11 rebounds and seven assists.

Julius Randle scored 31 points for the Knicks, who have lost four straight and seven of eight. They were without RJ Barrett, Obi Toppin and Quentin Grimes because of



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry blows a kiss at the fans after scoring a 3-point basket during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the New York Knicks, Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

AP

the NBA's health and safety protocols.

Curry and the Warriors weren't particularly sharp, perhaps drained by the emotion of the early celebration or a delayed arrival in New York due to flight issues out of Indiana, where they played Monday night.

But they made sure the faltering Knicks couldn't get anything going, gradually pulling away after a close first half. By the time Curry made his last 3 of the night, Golden State went up 97-85 with about 2:40 to play and had seized control long before that.

Nets 131, Raptors 129, OT

In New York, Patty Mills made a 3 to force overtime, Kevin Durant had 34 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, and the Brooklyn Nets beat the Toronto Raptors 131-129

on Tuesday night.

Durant was upgraded from questionable just before the game because Brooklyn has seven players in the NBA's health and safety protocol, including starters James Harden, LaMarcus Aldridge and DeAndre' Bembry. He responded to the last-minute add with his 14th triple-double of his career.

"I felt like it was something I could play on, so I knew I was going to play this morning," Durant said. "I hate that my teammates are out. I wish everybody was playing."

Brooklyn won its third straight, with Mills adding 30 points. It was the fourth career 30-point game in Mills' career, and his first since Nov. 1, 2019, when he was a member of the San Antonio Spurs. The Nets also got 17 from Kessler Edwards, 16 from Nic Claxton and 13 from Blake Griffin be-

fore he fouled out in overtime.

The loss snapped a two-game winning streak for Toronto (12-15). Fred VanVleet led the Raptors with 31. Gary Trent Jr. and Pascal Siakam each finished with 25.

"We know how good of a team we can be when we are clicking and doing what we are supposed to do," Siakam said. "Every time we haven't done that in season we pay for it."

Scottie Barnes had 23, but missed what would have been a game-winning, buzzer-beating 3 in overtime.

"I feel like we're right there as a team," Barnes said. "We'll get this thing really going as a unit."

Trailing by 10 entering the third quarter, Toronto outscored Brooklyn 44-25 to take a 100-91 advantage going into the fourth. But Brooklyn outscored Toronto 26-11 over the first 7:18 of the fourth quarter,

regaining the lead, 109-108, on a Mills 3 with 7:12 left. Another Mills 3 from the left side with 4:43 left extended the lead to 117-111.

It didn't last. Barnes knocked down two 3s to tie the game, and Trent made a 3 with 1:21 left to give the Raptors a 120-117 lead. That held until Mills' 3 with 13 seconds left forced overtime.

"I like how we responded throughout the whole game," Durant said. "Hitting them first and taking their punch—44-25 in the third—then turning it up in the fourth quarter and overtime, man. ... I'm so proud to just be a part of this group and play with these young dudes."

"Man, it was amazing to be out there."

Suns 111, Trail Blazers 107

In Portland, Ore., Deandre Ayton had 28 points and 13

rebounds in his return from a non-COVID-19 illness, and the Phoenix Suns held off the Portland Trail Blazers 111-107 in overtime Tuesday night.

Chris Paul, who made the jumper that forced overtime, added 24 points and 14 assists for a Phoenix team still missing leading scorer Devin Booker.

Damian Lillard had 31 points and 10 assists for the Blazers, who lost their sixth straight.

The Suns have just five losses this season, but one of them came the night before against the Los Angeles Clippers. Phoenix had lost two of four before facing the struggling Blazers.

Cam Johnson's deep 3-pointer gave the Suns a 107-104 lead in overtime, but Norman Powell's long jumper got Portland within one. Ayton's basket kept the Suns in front 109-106.

Lillard missed the first of two free throws with 11.9 seconds left and the Blazers couldn't catch up.

After trailing by 14 in the first half, Portland rallied to go up 86-81 on Tony Snell's 3-pointer in the fourth quarter.

It was tight the rest of the way. Cameron Payne's 3-pointer briefly gave Phoenix a 94-93 lead with 2:30 left, but Lillard answered with a 3 of his own.

The Suns tied it at 100 with 40.5 seconds left after Payne and Chris Powell each made a basket. Jusuf Nurkic missed the second of two free throws for the Blazers.

After a jump ball, a call that was challenged by the Suns leaving them with no time-outs, Paul fouled Powell, who missed his first free throw but hit the second to make it 102-100. Paul's jumper tied it at 102 with 8.2 seconds to go.

Injuries have plagued Portland in recent weeks, and starting guard CJ McCollum remained out with a punctured lung.

The Suns were minus Booker again because of a hamstring injury. Booker, who sat out his sixth game, is averaging 23.2 points. Abdel Nader remained out because of right knee injury management, and Jalen Smith missed his second game with a non-COVID-19 illness.

But the Suns welcomed back Ayton, their talented big man who missed the previous two games.

Phoenix went up 36-24 in the opening half after Mikal Bridges' jumper. Portland closed to 49-43 at the break. The Blazers struggled from 3-point range in the half, making just three of 18 attempts and missing 11 straight.

Portland narrowed the gap to 73-72 late in the third quarter after Robert Covington's short jumper and 3-pointer. He hit another 3 at the buzzer to give the Blazers the lead and cap an 11-0 run.

Harden in COVID-19 protocol; Nets down 7 players vs Raptors

NEW YORK (AP)—The Brooklyn Nets were without seven players, including James Harden, on Tuesday night because of the NBA's health and safety protocols.

The Nets only had enough remaining players to take the court against the Toronto Raptors because Kevin Durant was upgraded from questionable.

Aside from Harden, the Nets were missing starter LaMarcus Aldridge and DeAndre' Bembry along with reserves Jevon Carter, James Johnson, Bruce Brown and Paul Millsap.

"It's unfortunate for sure," Brooklyn coach Steve Nash said before the game. About a half-hour after he had finished—and an hour before



Brooklyn Nets center LaMarcus Aldridge (21) is defended by Detroit Pistons center Isaiah Stewart (28) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021, in Detroit.

AP

the opening tip—the team announced Harden and Brown had been placed into COVID-19 protocols.

"First we concern ourselves with their health and safety. Fortunately for us, they're pre-

dominantly asymptomatic but there will be a period of time required for them to test negative (before we can) have our full group available again."

Nash also said "a couple coaches (and) a couple staff

(members)" had been placed in protocols.

"We're not naive enough to not have concerns about more people contracting the virus, but that's out of our hands," Nash said. "Overall, we can't do a lot right now except wait for results to come in and control what's in our hands."

The Nets have been playing short-handed all season after Kyrie Irving refused to get vaccinated, which ruled him out for home games because of a New York City vaccine mandate. The team decided not to let him play solely in road games.

The NBA postponed two Chicago Bulls games this week because 10 of their players were in health and safety protocols.

Verlander, Astros finalize \$25 million, 1-year contract



HOUSTON
(AP)—Justin

Verlander's \$25 million, one-year contract with the Houston Astros has been finalized, nearly a month after it was agreed to.

The pitcher and the Astros reached an agreement on Nov. 17 subject to a successful physical. While the deal was reported before the collective bargaining agreement expired Dec. 1 and a signing freeze began, Major League Baseball and the players' association did not approve it until this week.

Verlander's agreement includes a \$25 million salary for 2022 and a \$25 million player option for 2023 conditioned on him pitching 130 or more innings in 2022.

Verlander became a free agent after completing a \$94 million, three-year contract with the Astros. He played in just one game in the past two seasons.

He made just one start in 2020, pitching six innings on July 24 in a win over Seattle on opening day before being placed on the injured list with



Houston Astros pitcher Justin Verlander throws to the St. Louis Cardinals during the first inning of a spring training baseball game on March 3, 2020, in Jupiter, Fla. AP

strained right forearm. He attempted a comeback, but announced on Sept. 19, 2020,

that he needed Tommy John surgery and underwent the procedure on Oct. 1.

He said earlier this year that his rehabilitation was going well and added he disliked

playing only one game in the time that deal covered.

"That gnaws at me," he said. "But ... this was an unfortunate injury that nobody could have seen coming. But I still do like to earn my keep."

The 38-year-old right-hander is a two-time Cy Young Award winner and the 2011 AL MVP.

Verlander spent his first 13 seasons with the Detroit Tigers before being traded to the Astros on Aug. 31, 2017. His stellar performance after the late deal helped Houston to its first World Series title that season. He is 43-15 with a 2.45 ERA and 640 strikeouts in 74 starts for the Astros.

Verlander went 21-6 with a 2.58 ERA in 2019, striking out a career-high 300 and throwing the third no-hitter of his career to win his second career Cy Young Award. He pitched 223 innings, most in the majors, and made six more starts in the postseason as the Astros reached the World Series.

Verlander is 226-129 with a 3.33 ERA in 16 seasons. Along with his Cy Young Awards and

MVP award, he was also the 2006 AL Rookie of the Year. He has 3,013 strikeouts in his career, which ranks 19th.

MLB BRIEFS

Fredi González shifting to bench coach for Orioles

BALTIMORE (AP)—Fredri González is taking on a new role with the Baltimore Orioles, becoming the team's bench coach.

The Orioles announced their 2022 major league coaching staff Tuesday and said González would shift from major league coach to bench coach. Baltimore named Matt Borgschulte and Ryan Fuller co-hitting coaches, and José Hernández shifts from assistant hitting coach to major league coach. The rest of the coaches remain in their same positions.

González managed the Marlins from 2007-10 and the Braves from 2011-16.

Borgschulte arrives from the Minnesota Twins' organization, where he spent the last four seasons. He was the hitting coach for Triple-A St. Paul in 2021.

Fuller was promoted from Double-A Bowie, where he spent last season.

Father: Padres star Fernando Tatis Jr. is fine after a fall

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP)—San Diego Padres shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. suffered scrapes on a knee and his hands in a fall in the Dominican Republic, but is doing fine, his father said Saturday.

"He is fine, in perfect condition," said the Padres star's father, former Major League infielder Fernando Tatis.

"They treated him here, it's not a big deal, just a fall, he scraped his knee and hands a little," said the elder Tatis, adding that reports that his son had fallen off a motorcycle were false.

He said the incident occurred last Sunday in San Pedro de Macoris province in the eastern part of the Dominican Republic.

Tatis Jr. just completed a season in which he finished third in the National League MVP voting. He led the NL with 42 homers in 130 games, batting .282, 97 RBIs and 25 stolen bases. His season also included two trips to the injured list with left shoulder issues.

Earlier in the year, he signed a \$340 million, 14-year contract with the Padres.

'Gone': MLB umpire Tripp Gibson home in tornado-hit Mayfield

By **BEN WALKER**
AP BASEBALL WRITER

Tripp Gibson was on the treadmill at his house near Seattle, a solid workout before heading to a holiday party with his wife.

To pass the time Friday afternoon, the Major League Baseball umpire was chatting on the phone with dad, just catching up on things back in his hometown.

His hometown of Mayfield, Kentucky.

Suddenly, as his father spoke, Gibson heard a tornado warning siren go off in the background. It was a familiar sound from his childhood days—as a kid, he once saw a small twister skip over his yard.

"It's probably nothing, right?" father and son figured.

Three hours later, Gibson got an urgent message from his sister: Tornado's hitting. Dad's taking cover in the bathroom.

Fortunately for Gibson, no one in his immediate family was hurt in the storms that devastated the city of about 10,000 in the southwest corner of the state and surrounding area.

By Saturday, after a flight from Seattle to Atlanta to Nashville and a two-hour drive, Gibson was back in the town where he spent most of his life.

"It's indescribable," he told The Associated Press on Monday from Mayfield. "You think of the movie 'Twister' and that's nothing compared to what we have here."

"All the people injured, displaced, maybe dead," he said. "There are no words."



Cincinnati Reds' David Bell, left, talks with umpire Tripp Gibson, right, between batters during the first inning of a baseball game against the San Diego Padres in Cincinnati, July 1, 2021. AP

At least eight people working at a Mayfield candle factory were killed, and not every local resident has been accounted for yet. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said Monday that at least 74 had died statewide.

Figuring out where things were in Mayfield is nearly impossible, the 40-year-old Gibson said.

"I'm coming down roads that I've driven thousands of times and there's nothing there," he said. "You don't even know where you are."

"Places that you landmarked as a kid, they're gone. There are no road signs. I don't even know where 6th Street and 7th Street and 8th

Street are anymore," he said.

At one point, his late grandfather owned almost all of the land around Courthouse Square.

"I spent one summer painting every building there by myself, up on three levels of scaffolding. I knew every inch of downtown," he said. "Now, it's hard to see."

As a boy, Gibson remembered Bruce Willis coming to town to shoot "In Country," a 1989 movie based on a novel by Mayfield native Bobbie Ann Mason. Willis enjoyed spending time with Gibson's father, Hoot, and some scenes were filmed on family property—Willis and his then-pregnant wife, Demi Moore, took

a picture with young Tripp.

Gibson's father and stepmother, Marietta, live about two-tenths of a mile from downtown Mayfield. They sheltered at a friend's house nearby when the tornado hit.

The family owns 100 homes in the Mayfield area, a business his grandfather, a U.S. Navy veteran, started in 1949 to partly help returning service members. Gibson said he and his dad visited about 25 of the houses on Monday.

"There are so many stories of survival," Gibson said.

Gibson went to Graves County High School and graduated from Murray State before becoming a professional

umpire in 2006. He worked his first MLB game in 2013, joined the full-time staff in 2015 and was on the crew for this year's National League Championship Series between Atlanta and the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Many current MLB umpires have Kentucky roots, including Sam Holbrook, Greg Gibson, Larry Vanover, Jerry Layne and Paul Nauert.

Umps Care Charities, formed by MLB umpires, has set up a fund to help those affected in the area. Several other organizations are aiding in the efforts, and monetary donations for the Mayfield Graves County Tornado Relief Fund are being collected by Independence Bank in Fancy Farm, Kentucky.

After Tripp Gibson landed in Nashville, he met up with fellow umpire D.J. Reyburn for the drive to Mayfield, stopping along the way at a Lowe's to pick up supplies.

"I'm just here to help," Gibson said. "We've got our hands full."

Gibson said he planned to stay in Mayfield for a week, then return after Christmas.

"I get to go back to Washington, to my wife and two boys, I'm lucky," he said. "The people here in Mayfield, that's who I'm thinking about."

The shock of what he saw will stay with him.

"I was concerned I could have an emotional-type breakdown. I don't think I've been able to fully emotionally process it," he said. "I don't have time for it now."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	20	8	.714	—
Philadelphia	15	13	.536	5
Boston	14	14	.500	6
Toronto	13	15	.464	7
New York	12	16	.429	8

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	16	12	.571	—
Washington	15	13	.536	1
Charlotte	15	14	.517	1½
Atlanta	13	14	.481	2½
Orlando	5	23	.179	11

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	17	10	.630	—
Milwaukee	18	11	.621	—
Cleveland	17	12	.586	1
Indiana	12	17	.414	6
Detroit	4	22	.154	12½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	17	11	.607	—
Dallas	14	13	.519	2½
San Antonio	10	16	.385	6
Houston	9	18	.333	7½
New Orleans	8	21	.276	9½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	19	7	.731	—
Denver	14	13	.519	5½
Minnesota	12	15	.444	7½
Portland	11	17	.393	9
Oklahoma City	8	18	.308	11

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	23	5	.821	—
Phoenix	22	5	.815	½
L.A. Clippers	16	12	.571	7
L.A. Lakers	15	13	.536	8
Sacramento	11	17	.393	12

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nick Sablan subdues super senior flight

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Despite his putting game going AWOL, Nick Sablan still dominated the super seniors flight of the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

The 69-year-old former national golfer came away with a 7-over 79 on the strength of a 38 in the front and a 41 in the back nine to rule the mighty *man'amko* category of the tournament.

"I'm happy because at least I beat all my friends," said Sablan, who added that he's glad that tournament organizers decided to split the division into seniors and super seniors.

Sablan, who picked up the sport in his late 20s, said despite his struggles in the green he's just happy to have come out on top of the super seniors.

"I only made one birdie. It was a scrambling game today. I cannot putt. I tried to do the best of a bad situation."

Sablan added that conditions at Laolao Bay Golf &



Super senior flight champion Nick Sablan, fourth from left, poses with, from left, tournament director Vicente "Ben" Babauta, McDonald's Guam and Saipan co-owner Marcia Ayuyu, second place Benjamin Jones Sr., McDonald's Guam and Saipan owner Jose "Joe" Ayuyu, and third placer Tony Satur during the awards banquet of the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

MARK RABAGO

NISHIMURA

From Page 20

The One FC in the championship game, as he found his target early, giving their team the 1-0 advantage, just two minutes into the title duel. However, The One FC's hold to the driver's seat was short-lived as six minutes later, Lillian Bloom Muldoon scored the equalizer.

Saipan United went on to grab the lead and win the division championship, thanks to Nishimura's goal in the second half.

The title victory capped Saipan United's perfect record in the shortened season. The Hafa Adai Cup champions won all its four games in pool play and then defeated Matansa and Chang Bai Hu in the first two matches in the playoffs before outclassing The One FC in the finale.

Meanwhile, Chang Bai Hu clinched third place in the division after downing Shirley's FC in the consolation game last Sunday.

Ming Guang Xing led Chang Bai Hu's win after firing five goals, while Xin Wen Jin and Xiong Zhe Li contributed one goal apiece. Irish Pagarao made a pair for Shirley's, which got its two other goals from Jack Phan and Risty Vergara.

In the MSL Cup, Paire also bagged the third place honors after easing past Eleven Tiger, 9-3.

Danny Agulto, Jireh Yobech, and Chris Nelson teamed up in the victory after scoring two goals apiece, while Ajani Burrell, Mareko Tekopua, and Steve McKagan chipped in one each. Tanapon Unsa posted all three goals for Eleven Tiger.

SWIMMERS

From Page 20

It has been a long time since I've been in one, so I can't wait to compete."

Sikkel said the team has been taken cared off very well by their hosts in the UAE.

"The team has been in the pool twice. Food is awesome and we have two practice slots per day. Lots of things to see for them and in awe of the height of some of the competition."

He added that it's normal for CNMI swimmers to hold some reverence for the top swimmers they only used to watch in the Olympics and other international competitions.

"The FINA World Championships is like a rock concert for swimming. It is quite the spectacle. Teams from all over

Resort were pretty good last Saturday, but it didn't help with his faulty putting.

"If I could only putt it would've been better. At least I got to challenge the younger guys," he said.

Coming in second in the super senior flight was Benjamin

Jones Sr. with his 82 (42-40). Jones was earlier heckled by one of the players for having a higher score than his wife, Sherlyn, who came in second in the ladies flight with an 81. His witty rebuttal was classic though, as he told the heckler, "My score is still better than

your's" Third place in the super seniors went to CNMI Hall of Famer Tony Satur with his 85 (43-42).

Established in 1987, the Ronald McDonald House Charities has helped over 38,000 families from the CNMI, Guam, Federated

States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, and Hawaii. It's not directly affiliated with McDonald's Corp. or any of its restaurants and relies heavily on the support of the community to continue delivering services for those in need.



CNMI swimmers pose with Japan's Daiya Seto, the gold medalist of last FINA short course meet and world record-holder.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

the world participate. Swimming powerhouses like the U.S. and China are here and at the same time there are a lot

of tiny nations from all over the world represented here. It is a great opportunity for our developing swimmers to see a

whole new level of competition," said Sikkel.

No CNMI swimmer will compete in Day 1 of the 15th

TAJIMA

From Page 20

"It was a great honor to represent the CNMI in the 2018 Windsurfing World Cup tournament in Japan. It was first time for me to enter such a big tournament and it's good experience to meet with famous windsurfers in the world. The experience gave me confidence. So I decided to move to Japan in the Spring of 2020 and challenge various races," he said.

However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic many

races were cancelled in 2020. Thankfully, restrictions eased this year and Tajima and other windsurfers were finally able to compete again.

"I could join some races again and finally I won in the JWA Amateur Super Slalom tournament and received a title to become a JWA professional windsurfer next year. I would like to express my great appreciation for the people who has supported me since I started the windsurfing at the age of 12 years old. I miss Saipan a lot, my windsurfing friends, the beautiful blue ocean, and

the tropical weather. I haven't gotten used to the cold and rough water in the winter season in Japan. But I will never give up and do my best!"

Tajima currently works at a shop called 85 Club in Chiba. It is also the beaches in Chiba, near where he lives, that he practices windsurfing every day since relocating to his parents' home country in March 2020.

Now that he can compete as a professional, Tajima can set his sights on his next goal that is to become an Olympian.

"In order to compete with

the people who are aiming for the Paris Olympics, I definitely need more time to practice. But I have to work and earn enough money for the races. The reason I want to be a professional soon is because if I become a professional there will be more chances for me to find new sponsors so I'll be able to concentrate more on my training."

Tajima first learned to windsurf at the age of 12 when his father taught him the sport at Seawind Marine Sports in Mi-cro Beach.

"To my parents, sponsors, and all the people in Saipan

FINA World Swimming Championships. All swimmers will see action in Day 2 tomorrow with Suzuki and Asaka Litulumar competing in the 200m freestyle and 100m freestyle, respectively. Tenorio then follows with the preliminaries of the 100m backstroke and the 50m backstroke for Shoko Litulumar. All four will then compete in the 4x50m freestyle mixed.

Tenorio plunges into the pool again on Saturday in the 50m freestyle with the whole team competing in the 4x50m medley mixed later in the afternoon.

Shoko Litulumar sees action in the 50 backstroke on Sunday. Suzuki and Asaka Litulumar return to action on Monday in the 100m freestyle and 50m freestyle, respectively.

and Japan who has always supported me thank you," he said.

His parents said they're very proud of what their son has achieved in the sport and bringing honor to the CNMI.

"We are very happy that he can become a professional windsurfer. He always loves windsurfing and did it almost every day when he lived on Saipan. He learned how to windsurf from his dad. My husband's hobby is also windsurfing. Also, many of our windsurfing friends helped him. We are so grateful for their support," said Hiroko.



Curry gets NBA record for 3-pointers, Warriors beat Knicks **PAGE 17**

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Nick Sablan subdues super senior flight **PAGE 19**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Swimmers finally get some pool time

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI National Swimming Team finally got some practice time in an actual swimming pool as they start their campaign in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Shoko and Asaka Litulumar, along with national coach Hiroyuki Kimura and Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation representatives Richard Sikkell and Hiroko Tenorio, arrived in the UAE last Monday and all are expected to attend the opening ceremonies set for today at the cavernous Etihad Arena in Yas Bay, Yas Island.

To say the CNMI swimmers are excited to compete in the world stage is an understatement, as they them-



CNMI national swimmers Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Shoko and Asaka Litulumar pose inside the Etihad Arena, the site of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

selves expressed their awe in getting the opportunity to represent the CNMI in the world championships.

"So far this has been a very good experience because I have never been

at an event this big. It feels good to swim in an actual competition pool because it makes me feel better when I swim," said Suzuki.

Tenorio seconded Suzuki but added

that he wishes the CNMI will someday have an Olympic-size pool again.

"I feel very grateful and happy to experience this type of stage. Makes me wish I really had a pool back

home. Not this size but an actual pool. I feel like we can get faster and faster if we had a pool back home. We were all nervous at first but I had a good feeling when I first got into the water and swam 25 meters for the first time in two years. I am excited for the results and depending on the results I hope some kind of action will be taken toward making a pool back home," he said.

Shoko Litulumar can't help but become a fan in the presence of swimmers she looks up to.

"The experience in Abu Dhabi so far is amazing. I've met the swimmers I admired and seeing fast people made my heart pound. I feel excited for the coming meet!"

She also felt some nostalgia for the old Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi after first gazing on the 25m pool in Abu Dhabi.

"The feeling of swimming in an actual pool is amazing. The pool is very clear, there are diving blocks, and there was the nostalgic lane line that made up my childhood swimming. I am very excited for the upcoming meet!" she said.

Her sister Asaka, meanwhile, seems to be all business preparing for the world championships.

"My experience is good so far. I have been working for this moment and I'm happy to be in Abu Dhabi. I feel excited to be back in a 25m pool!"

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Nishimura hands Saipan United title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Kuu Nishimura scored three goals over the weekend to help Saipan United bag the Hafa Adai Cup in the Marianas Soccer League Fall Season 2021.

The Saipan International School student first delivered a pair in their 4-1 triumph over Chang Bai Hu in the semifinals last Friday and then hit the go-ahead goal in their 2-1 finals victory against The One FC last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Nishimura's twin goals against Chang Bai Hu was recorded in back-to-back fashion, as he lit up the board in the 12th and 16th minute. Ichiro Borja made it three in a row for Saipan United with his goal in the 20th minute and the team zeroed in on the second and last finals berth in the Hafa Adai Cup after drawing in a goal from MD Sohel Akanda in the 59th minute. Chang Bai Hu avoided a shutout loss when Ri Cheng Xian broke the squad's silence in the 63rd minute.

Following the easy semis win



Kuu Nishimura, seen here left free by NMI Women's U18 National Team defenders during an earlier game in the Hafa Adai Cup in the Marianas Soccer League Fall Season 2021, scored the go-ahead goal in their 2-1 finals win over The One FC last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

over Chang Bai Hu, Nishimura and company met The One FC in last Sunday's finale and this time faced a tougher challenger. The One FC took the first finals seat after nosing

out Shirley's FC in the earlier semis game, 1-0. Zhipeng Lin recorded the winning goals for The One FC.

Lin also tallied the only goal for

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Tajima turning pro next year

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Wataru Tajima can now compete as a professional windsurfer next year after winning the downwind slalom championship of the 18th All Japan Amateur Super Slalom tournament held Dec. 11 and 12 in Yokosuka, Japan.

Born and raised in the CNMI, the 21-year-old Marianas High School alumnus said he's glad to win the special class in the Japan Windsurfing Association-sponsored tournament as he can now compete in the 2022 JWA circuit as a professional windsurfer.

"I am glad to win the championship because it was one of my dreams to become a pro," he said.

The son of Hiroshi and Hiroko Tajima said his championship in the 18th All Japan Amateur Super Slalom culminated his long and arduous journey in the sport of windsurfing.

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Wataru Tajima shows off his trophy and windsurfing board after winning the downwind slalom championship of the 18th All Japan Amateur Super Slalom tournament held Dec. 11 and 12 in Yokosuka, Japan. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**